Talks and Questions & Answers on Miscellaneous Topics

Venerable
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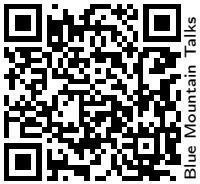

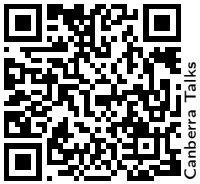

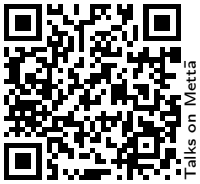

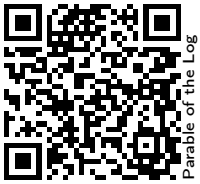

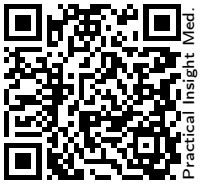

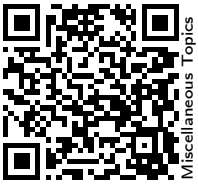

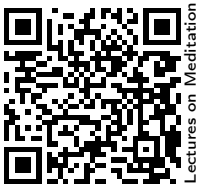

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Meditation Instructions

First of all, we should know the difference between *samathā* and *vipassanā* meditation. Unless we are able to understand the difference between these two types of meditation, no one can practise any type of meditation very well because one gets confused. In Buddhism there are two types of meditation; one is *samathā* meditation and the other is *vipassanā* meditation.

Samathā here means concentration or the mental states that make the mind calm. When the mind is concentrated on a single object it is called concentration of mind. So, to obtain a higher degree of concentration, *samathā* is practised. The purpose of *samathā* meditation is to attain the higher degree of concentration which is called *jhāna* or *appana*. This *jhāna* is called "*zhan*" in Burmese, "*chan*" in Chinese and "*zen*" in Japanese. *Zen* here means concentration, but some Buddhist scholars translated "*zen*" into "meditation". Here, *jhāna* is deep concentration or a higher degree of concentration. To attain deep concentration of mind, you have to contemplate, or you have to concentrate your mind, on a single object of meditation such as respiration, devices of *kasiṇa*, *asubhā* and so on.

Most Buddhists practise the meditation on respiration. Respiration meditation is known as *anapanasati* in Pāli. When you start this *samathā* meditation, taking respiration as the object of meditation, you have to focus your mind on the in-breathing and out-breathing. The mind should be focused on the nostril. When you breathe in, the air touches at the nostril; you observe it, mak-

ing a mental note, "in" or "breathe in". When the air goes out, or when you breathe out, the air touches the nostril, and you observe it, making a mental note, "out". In this way, "in, out—in, out", focusing the mind at the nostril.

Then the mind doesn't stay with the in-breathing and out-breathing. It goes out and wanders and thinks about something else, about your family, about your friends, about your school or university, about your education and so on. When the mind goes out and thinks about something else, you bring the mind back to the object of meditation, that is, to the nostril. Bring the mind back and focus it at the nostril and note, "in, out—in, out". But though you focus the mind at the nostril it doesn't stay there for a long time. In the beginning of the practice it very often goes out and wanders. Then you bring it back to the nostril and focus it there, making mental notes, "in, out—in, out". In this way, you gradually come to concentrate your mind on in-breathing and out-breathing to a certain extent. Then you proceed with your practice.

Then, after, say, a week or ten days the mind gradually becomes more and more concentrated on the in-breathing and become better and deeper. When you spend about, say, two or three months on your meditation, your mind may be deeply concentrated on in-breathing and out-breathing at the nostril to a larger extent. The mind may stay with the breath for about 10 or 15 minutes. In this way, you have to strive your best to have deeper concentration of mind at the nostril on in-breathing and out-breathing. Then, finally your mind is totally absorbed into the object, which is in-breathing and out-breathing.

Then, you haven't any hindrances in your mind. It means that while your mind is well and deeply concentrated on in-breathing and out-breathing at the nostril, it has no disturbances, no irritation. It doesn't get annoyed.

Mental states, such as sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse and sceptical doubts are called hindrances. These hindrances do not appear in a concentrated

mind because the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, which is in-breathing and out-breathing. So, none of these hindrances can come to the mind because the mind is deeply concentrated on the object. It means that the deep concentration of mind removes those mental defilements. Mental hindrances do not come into the concentrated mind. So, as long as the mind is deeply concentrated, you don't have any mental hindrances.

Then the mind becomes calm, quiet, tranquil and serene. You enjoy peacefulness as long as the mind is deeply concentrated on in-breathing and out-breathing. It is called *jhāna* or absorption. The mind is well fixed on the object of meditation. But, though your mind is absolutely concentrated on the object of meditation, it doesn't realize any mental states or physical processes in their true nature. *Samathā* meditation is concentration meditation, not realization meditation.

Another type of meditation is *vipassanā* meditation. *Vipassanā* here means realization of the three characteristics of existence or mental and physical phenomena. What are the three characteristics? They are impermanence (*aniccā*), suffering (*dukkhā*), and the impersonal or no soul, no-self-nature of phenomena (*anattā*).

These three characteristics must be thoroughly realized by a meditator so that he can destroy all mental hindrances or defilements such as greed, lust, craving, attachment, desire, ill will, ignorance, conceit, jealousy and so on. If a meditator has realized impermanence, suffering and the impersonal nature of these mental and physical phenomena which constitute a so-called person, a being, an "I" or a "you", he doesn't take any of the mental states or physical processes to be a person, a being, an "I" or a "you". Then he has removed the concept of personality, individuality, self or soul, which is the seed of all mental defilements and mental hindrances. When the concept of a person or a being has been destroyed, there won't arise any mental defilements or hindrances such as greed, hatred, etc. You feel

happy and peaceful. You can live in peace and happiness. That is *vipassanā* meditation.

Vipassanā is translated into insight. The insight knowledge that penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena is called *vipassanā ñana. Vipassanā*, or insight meditation, is practised to realize bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature or the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena as they really are. To realize the true nature of bodily and mental phenomena, you need some degree of concentration. To obtain some degree of concentration, you have to be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs. You should not think about the mental or physical state. You should not analyse it. You should not criticize it.

In *vipassanā* meditation there is no room for analysing, thinking about, criticizing, intellectual reasoning, logical thinking, or preconception. What you should do is to just pay bare attention to what is happening to your body and mind as it really occurs. You mustn't have any reaction regarding the object. You mustn't get involved into the object, either a mental state or a physical process. You mustn't judge whether the object is good or bad. What you should do is just to be aware of it as it really occurs. Just observe it as it is. Just be mindful of it as it really occurs, without getting involved in it, without reaction, without judgement. Watch it as it is. Watch any mental state or physical process as it really occurs, that's all. Be mindful of it as it really occurs. Then, when your mindfulness becomes gradually constant, continuous and powerful, your mind will be concentrated to a certain extent. You begin to realize the true nature of the mental state or physical process which is observed as it is. This meditation is known as mindfulness meditation or insight meditation or *vipassanā* meditation.

In this mindfulness meditation the most important thing is to be aware of whatever arises in your mind as it is. While you are meditating you may think about your family, your work, or your friends. The mind goes out, wanders, thinks about some-

thing else. Sometimes you have a great deal of imagination, or sometimes you plan for your future, and so on. Then you must be mindful of these mental states, thoughts, thinking, planning or imagination by making mental note, "thinking, thinking" or "imagining, imagining". When you see any image in your mind, note it as, "seeing, seeing", without analysing it, without thinking about it, without criticizing it. In this *vipassanā* meditation non-reacting awareness, or non-judging mindfulness, is the most important factor to be successful in this meditation. You mustn't react.

You mustn't have any reaction when you see any object, when you hear any sound or voice, when you smell any odour or scent, when you taste any food, when you touch any tangible thing, when you think about anything. You mustn't have any reaction to these objects. In order to not to have reaction, you have to observe either the consciousness of seeing, the consciousness of hearing, the consciousness of smelling, the consciousness of tasting, the consciousness of touching, or the mind which is thinking about something, by making mental notes, "seeing", "hearing", "smelling", "tasting", "touching", or "thinking" as the case may be. When you are able to observe or to note any of these 6 consciousnesses, you don't have any reaction to it.

For example, because of powerful mindfulness of the consciousness of seeing, the consciousness of seeing can't see the object very well, so it is unable to judge whether the object is good or bad. When the consciousness of seeing can't judge the object as good or bad, you don't feel good or bad about the object. Then you don't have any reaction to it. If you do not observe, if you are not mindful of the consciousness of seeing, when you see something, the consciousness of seeing sees the object for a very long time, whereby it can judge whether the object is good or bad. If the consciousness of seeing judges the object to be good, you feel a pleasant sensation about the object. When the consciousness of seeing judges the object to be bad you feel an unpleasant sensation about the object. You like it, you love it,

you want to get it. You have a desire for this object because you feel it is good. That desire is a reaction to the object which was not observed or noted. That desire is the cause of suffering, the cause of *dukkhā*. The cause of *dukkhā*, desire, arises because you are not able to observe the visible object, so you have a reaction. The reaction arises in the form of desire or love.

So, in order to not have any reaction from the object, you have to be aware of it. You have to observe it. You have to note it, making mental notes, "seeing, seeing", "hearing", "smelling", "tasting", "touching", or "thinking", as the case may be. When you are able to observe any object, either a mental state or a physical process, you don't have any reaction to it. Then you feel calm, quiet and tranquil. That is why we call mindfulness meditation as non-reacting awareness, non-judging mindfulness. What you need to practise insight meditation, is just to be mindful of, just to be aware of, what is happening to your body and mind as it really occurs, that's all. You mustn't have preconceptions when you practise this meditation. If you allow preconceptions to come into your mind when you are meditating, you can't rightly understand the true nature of mental and physical phenomena which are observed. The principle of *vipassanā* meditation, mindfulness meditation is to be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs; to be aware of any mental states or physical processes in their true nature; to observe any activity of mind or body as it really occurs.

So, the technique is not difficult. It is very easy and simple, but very effective if you perseveringly practise this meditation. You have to be patient before you attain any higher stage of insight knowledge or enlightenment. Perseverance, patience and strenuous efforts are the greatest qualities needed by a meditator to be successful in his meditation.

Here, when we know that the principle of mindfulness meditation or *vipassanā* meditation is to observe any mental states or physical processes as they really occur, we know from this fact that in *vipassanā* meditation we can have many different ob-

jects, not just a single object like in *samathā* meditation. So, here, what we should know about the difference between *samathā* and *vipassanā* meditation is that *samathā* meditation has only a single object of meditation, such as respiration, and *vipassanā* meditation has many different objects of meditation because all mental states and all physical processes are the objects of meditation. Any mental state or physical process which is predominantly arising at the moment is the object of meditation. You have to observe that mental state or physical process which is predominantly arising at the moment, making mental notes.

To make it easy you start with the noting of the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. Contemplation of the rising and falling movements of the abdomen is not respiration meditation. It is called contemplation of material elements, because we have to be aware of the four material elements, namely the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the wind or air element. We are mainly concerned with these four material elements at the beginning of the practice. To observe the rising and falling movements of the abdomen is called contemplation of material elements, *dhatu manasikara* in Pāli. It is not respiration meditation, though the rising and falling movements of the abdomen is connected to in-breathing and out-breathing. It is not in- and out-breathing, but just abdominal movement. The air or wind element in the abdomen rises or falls, moves forward or backward, sometimes the air moves upward or downward. These upward and downward movements are observed; these outward and inward movements of the abdomen are observed, making mental notes, "rising, falling—rising, falling".

This is not respiration meditation, not breathing meditation. It is called *dhatu manasikara*. It is the subject of one of the chapters in the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness expounded by the Buddha. Because it is not respiration meditation, you must not cling to the abdominal movements as the only object of meditation, because in *vipassanā* meditation the abdominal movement is a kind of physical process, one of

the many objects of meditation, not the single object of meditation. When you feel the rising or forward movement of the abdomen, you observe it, making a mental note, "rising". When the abdomen falls or moves backward, you should note, "falling". In this way, whenever the abdomen moves forward, observe it, making a mental note, "rising". When it moves backward, observe it, being mindful of it and making a mental note, "falling".

But while you are contemplating on the rise and fall of the abdominal movement, the mind may go out, wander. In the beginning of the practice you are not aware of it. But later you come to realize that the mind is going out, the mind is wandering, the mind is thinking about something. As soon as you realize that the mind is wandering, you must follow the mind which is wandering and observe it, note it, as it really occurs, making mental notes, "thinking, thinking", "wandering, wandering". After the wandering mind has stopped, the thinking mind has stopped, return to the primary object, the rising and falling movements of the abdomen, and note as usual, "rising, falling". When your mind goes out again, you follow the mind and observe it, "going out, going out" or "wandering, wandering" and when it has stopped, you return to the primary object and note as usual.

When you have sat for, say, 20 or 30 minutes, you may feel pain in some part of your body. You may feel pain in the leg, you may feel pain in the ankle, you may feel pain in the back. If that painful sensation is more distinct than the movement of the abdomen, you should note the painful sensation because it is predominantly arising at that moment, making a mental note, "pain, pain, pain", observing it attentively, energetically and intently, "pain, pain, pain". The pain may become more severe. You must be patient with and mindful of it as it is, making a mental note, "pain, pain". When the painful sensation becomes unbearable, you should get up and practise walking meditation. To practise walking meditation is better than to change the posi-

tion. To relieve the pain you must not change the position. You should get up and practise walking meditation.

In the walking meditation, you should observe the movement of the foot. When you make a left step, you should focus your mind on the movement of the left foot. When you make a right step you should focus your mind on the movement of the right foot, making a mental note, "right, left—right, left". The movement of the foot is *vayo-dhatu*, the wind or air element which must be thoroughly realized as it is.

When you are able to observe the movement of the right foot and the movement of the left foot very well, you can observe two parts of a step: the lifting part and the dropping part. When you lift the foot, observe the lifting movement, making a mental note, "lifting". When you drop the foot, you observe it as dropping, making a mental note, "dropping". When you feel the lifting movement of the other foot make a mental note, "lifting". When you drop the foot down, you should observe the movement of dropping, making a mental note, "dropping". In this way, "lifting, dropping—lifting, dropping".

When you are able to note, "lifting, dropping" very well, you should increase the objects to note: lifting movement, pushing movement and dropping movement. After you have lifted your foot, you push it forward and drop it down; you have made one step. So, one step must be observed in three parts: lifting part, pushing part, and dropping part. In this way, "lifting, pushing, dropping". Then the other foot, "lifting, pushing, dropping".

You mustn't look around here and there while you are practising walking meditation. Your eyes should be half closed looking at a place about 6 feet ahead of you, not nearer than that. Then the mind should be focused on each movement of the foot, "lifting, pushing, dropping—lifting, pushing, dropping", slowly. If you walk quickly and fast, you are not able to be aware of each movement of the foot, so you have to slow down.

When you have reached the other end of the walk, you should turn around. When you are about to turn around, you

have wanting or intention to turn the body around. Then you should note, "wanting, wanting" or "intending, intending", after which you note the turning movement of the body, slowly, "turning, turning". You may observe the movement of your foot too, when you turn your body. The foot also turns one after the other. You can observe the movement of the foot too, making mental notes, "turning, turning". When your face is in the direction where you came from, you stand still and observe the standing posture, "standing, standing", for about 10 times. Then you walk back to the other end, making mental notes, "lifting, pushing, dropping".

In this way, you should practise walking meditation for at least 1 hour. But for beginners it may be somewhat difficult to walk for 1 hour. So, he should walk for about 30 minutes, making mental notes, "lifting, pushing, dropping". When you have reached the end of the walk you do the same. First of all, stand still, and note, "standing", observing the erect posture of standing, the upright posture of the body. Then you note, "intending, intending", after which you turn your body, "turning, turning", slowly, not quickly. In this way, you should walk back and forth, up and down along the same line. Then you can concentrate your mind on the movement of the feet to a certain extent gradually, that is concentration, *samādhi* in Pāli. This *samādhi* can be obtained by means of continuous mindfulness, powerful mindfulness. Walking meditation and sitting meditation should be practised alternately. Nonetheless every sitting meditation should be preceded by walking meditation.

After you have walked, you are about to walk to the place where you are to sit. The mindfulness and concentration you have attained in walking meditation should not be interrupted, should not be disrupted when you walk to the place where you are to sit for meditation. So, after walking, you have to be mindful of the movement of the foot, "lifting, pushing, dropping—lifting, pushing, dropping", when you walk to the place where you are to sit, so that your concentration is not disrupted. You

have to be mindful of the movement of the foot until you have reached the place where you are to sit, and stand there and note, "standing, standing". The upright posture of the body must be focused. Then, you are about to sit down for your meditation. Then, you intend to sit down. That intention must be noted and observed, making mental notes, "intending, intending". Then you sit down to your seat slowly. The whole process of sitting down must be observed, making mental notes, "sitting down, sitting down". When the body touches the seat or the mat note, "touching, touching". When you arrange your legs and hands, all the movements must be observed as they are.

When you sit in a crossed legged position, or in any position you feel comfortable, your spine must be kept straight, erect, but not stretched out, but it must be kept straight. Your neck and head should be straight. Then, close your eyes and focus your mind on the rising and falling movements of the abdomen because it is your primary object. So, focus the mind there. When the abdomen rises, observe the rising movement and note, "rising". When it falls note, "falling". Observe the rising movement, making a mental note, "rising". Observe the falling movement, making a mental note, "falling". In this way, "rising, falling—rising, falling".

Sitting meditation and walking meditation must be alternate. If you change from sitting to walking meditation, when you get up from the seat you have to be aware of all the movements of your hands, legs and body as they occur. When you go to the place where you are to walk, you have to be aware of the movement of the left foot and the right foot, making mental notes, "left, right—left, right". When you reach the place where you are to walk, you stand still, observing the standing posture, making mental notes, "standing, standing". In this way, you have to be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really is. This is mindfulness meditation, insight meditation. Its purpose is to realize all mental states and physical processes as they really occur.

May all of you rightly understand the technique of this mindfulness meditation, insight meditation or *vipassanā* meditation, and strive your best to achieve your goal.

Meditation Instructions, contd.

The mind must stay with the movement of the foot while you are walking. If the mind goes to other parts, such as beneath the foot or to the knee, the concentration becomes weak. Unless you slow down your stepping, you are unable to watch precisely and energetically. Then your concentration is weak.

You must not look around here and there. Desire is a cause and looking is an effect. When the cause is destroyed, there will not arise an effect. When the desire has been destroyed there will not arise the effect of looking and you will not look around. The best way of controlling your eyes is to note the desire to look, when it arises. When you have a desire to look at something, you should note, "desire, desire", until the desire has disappeared. When the desire has disappeared, you won't look around, your concentration won't break. So be careful to note desire, to observe desire, until it has disappeared. Only after it has disappeared you can continue to observe the movement of the foot as usual.

When you have been walking five or ten minutes, your mind may go out, your mind may wander, or you may think about something. Then you stop walking, stand still, and note, "wan-

dering", or "thinking", until that thought has disappeared. After it has disappeared, you resume your walking.[1]

Your stepping must be short, about the length of a foot, so that you can put down your foot very well and note it very precisely and closely. Before you put your foot on the ground or floor, you may unconsciously already have lifted the heel of the other foot, if your step is long. You then miss the awareness of the lifting of the heel when you note, "lifting". That is because your step is long. After you have put down your foot very well in its place, you begin to lift the heel of the other foot. You can then note it very well and you can be aware of the very beginning of the lifting of the heel.

After you have noted, "left, right" for about 10 minutes, you may note three parts of a step, "lifting, pushing, dropping". If you think that you can skip the noting of two parts of a step, go straight to the noting of three parts. Awareness of two parts of a step is not very good because it is as if you lift the foot and drop or put it down at the same place. Actually, after you lift the foot you have to push it forward a certain distance and then put it down. By noting, "dropping" after, "lifting" you have skipped noting the process of pushing movement, "pushing". The middle part of the step is lost. So, if you think you are able to note three parts after noting, "left, right" then you should do it.

When you drop your foot down, the foot touches the ground or floor. You can note it as, "touching". In this way, you note, "lifting, pushing, dropping, touching". Immediately before you lift the heel of the other foot, you have to press the front foot a little bit. Then that pressure must be aware of and noted as, "pressing"—"lifting, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing". The commentary says that a step may be noted in 6 parts. As such, when you lift the heel note, "lifting" and when you raise

[1] Canberra Retreat, 1990.

the toes note, "raising". In this way, "lifting, raising, pushing, dropping, touching, pressing".[2]

Every action is preceded by a mental process, that is wishing, wanting or intending. When you wish to lift the foot, you lift it. Not only the lifting of the foot but also all other actions and movements are preceded by the mental process of wishing, wanting, or intending. If you are able to note intention, wanting, or wishing you come to realize the relationship between the movement of the foot and the mental process. To realize how these two processes, the physical process of movement and the mental process of intention are related to each other, you have to attain deep concentration by being aware of the movement of the foot.

If you have realized how the two processes are related to each other, you don't have any idea of a person who is walking, a being who is lifting the foot, a self who is pushing forward the foot. Then, what you realize is that intention or wishing, a mental process that causes the movement of the foot to arise. Without intention, the movement cannot be done. In this way, you come to realize the law of cause and effect in your walking meditation.[3]

Then, what causes the foot to lift? The agent that lifts the foot is the intention. The intention causes the toes to be raised, the intention pushes the foot forward, the intention causes the foot to push forward, and so on. You do not find any person, self, or soul who lifts the foot, raises the toe and pushes forward. The reality is that the intention causes the foot to lift, raise, push forward, and drop down. It is an intention, not a person, not a being, no "I", or "you". It is a mental state. When it arises, it passes away. It is not a permanent entity, not an everlasting entity which may be regarded as a person. It's just a natural process of mentality which causes the foot to push forward and so on.[4]

[2] St. Paul's Retreat, 1990.
[3] St. Paul's Retreat, 1990.
[4] Canberra Retreat, 1990.

Therefore, you note, "intending, lifting, intending, raising, intending, pushing, intending, dropping, touching, and intending, pressing". When you note touching, it is not preceded by intention because as soon as you drop your foot to the ground, it touches the ground whether you have the intention or not. Actually, there is no intention. So, before touching you need not note intention because there is no intention. In this way, "intending, lifting, intending, raising, intending, pushing, intending, dropping, touching, intending, pressing".[5]

The Omniscient Buddha taught us to be aware of all four postures which are walking, standing, sitting and lying down. When you are doing all these four postures, you must be aware of all actions and movements involved in these four postures without failure. After that the Buddha taught us to be aware of all daily activities or physical movements:

ābhikkante paṭikkante sampajānakārī hoti,
ālokite vilokite sampajānakārī hoti

Here, what the Buddha taught us is that we must be mindful of any activity of the body, any physical process, as it really is. Whatever we are doing must be noted and whatever we are doing, we must be aware of it as it is without fail, so that we have continuity of mindfulness for the whole day. Continuity of mindfulness is the cause of deep concentration. When mindfulness is interrupted, there are gaps between the previous mindfulness and the following mindfulness. Then mindfulness cannot be continuous and constant.

To rightly understand the absolute reality of the body-mind processes, you have to be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it is. The omniscient Buddha said, when you stretch out your arms, you should be mindful of, "stretching, stretching". When you stretch out your legs, you should be mindful of, "stretching, stretching". When you bend your arm or

[5] St. Paul's Retreat, 1990.

leg, you must note, "bending, bending". As long as you are bending the arm or leg you must be aware of the bending movement. As long as the leg or hand is stretching out, you must be aware of the stretching movement, so that you can rightly understand the reality of the movement of the hand and the movement of the leg. This is wind or air element. In this way, when you put your hand down or when you lift it up, you should be aware of it.[6]

During sitting meditation, you may be experiencing a severe painful sensation. You are patient with it and do not change your position, because you know it is not good to change your position in a sitting. However, though you do not change your position, your hand is moving here and there. Instead of changing your position you move your hand. Sometimes the hand touches the face or head. Without any itchy sensation you may rub the face or hand. Sometimes, when you feel restless or when you feel a severe pain, your hand lifts itself and then touches or rests on the knee and so on. In sitting meditation you mustn't move even the hands. You should sit like a statue so that your concentration doesn't break and it becomes deep and stable. When you move your hand from one place to another, the mind goes with the hand. Then concentration breaks. When you get used to moving unconsciously you may do it as a habit in future. You must remind yourself of a statue, saying, "I must sit like a statue of the Buddha".

Unconsciously, you move your hand. But even though we say, it is an unconscious movement, actually your mind goes with the hand. Without intention to move the hands, you don't move. Because you have intention to move, you do it. That intention is a mental process. The concentration of the mind is a mental process. When you move your hand, your mind goes with the hand

[6] Canberra Retreat, 1990.

and concentration breaks. So, please be careful not to move even your hands from one place to another in sitting meditation.[7]

To have deep concentration, your mindfulness must be continuous and constant for the whole day, as long as you are awake. To have a continuous and constant mindfulness, you have to put enough effort into the noting during your practice. You have to be mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind while you are sitting, walking, or are engaged in your daily life. In this way, you can obtain continuous and uninterrupted mindfulness for the whole day. To have this continuous mindfulness, you have to put enough effort into your practice. In order to put enough effort into your practice you need strong faith in your technique of meditation or the Dhamma.[8]

What is the cause of suffering, *dukkhā*? *Lobha* or attachment is the cause of suffering. Even if you are attached to a good experience in meditation, it is *dukkhā*. Meditation is the thing which you should experience, not the thing which you are attached to. Is it right? If you are attached to your good experience you had yesterday, and today your meditation is not good, concentration is poor, you are about to cry over it. You feel restless because you want to re-experience those good things you had yesterday. The more effort you put in your noting, the more distraction you have, the more restless you become and the more suffering you have. That is not because of meditational experience, but because of attachment to it. Attachment is the cause of suffering, *dukkhā*. That is why the Buddha said that attachment is *samudāya saccā*. *Samudāya* is the cause or origin. *Sacca* is the truth. *Samudāya saccā* is the truth of the cause of suffering. So, attachment is the cause of suffering. It is right?[9]

[7] St. Paul's Retreat, 1990.
[8] Canberra Retreat, 1990.
[9] St. Paul's Retreat, 1990.

Meditation Instructions, contd.

Sometimes, while doing walking meditation, your mind may go out or wander, but you continue repeating mentally, "lifting, pushing, dropping". When you reach the other wall you stand there, "Ha! My mind is going out (or wandering)". At that time you are startled by your finding. That is because you do not observe, you do not know thought, so you think you are observing the movement of the foot. When you try to observe the mind, at last you come to know whenever there is thought; maybe some time after its arising, maybe almost at the end of the thought process. However, later on, when you come to know thought, say, about two or three seconds after its arising, sometimes you catch the thought in action. Sometimes you know the mind which is planning to go out, because you observe it, you come to know the thought and its tricks. So, in this mental training you must observe the thought whenever it arises, without failure. But at first you do not know, you are not aware of the thought even though it is arising. But later on, gradually you come to know, say, if the mind goes out 10 times you may know about three times and you can observe it. Later on you can know 6 times, then you observe it. Later on you can know 8 times, then you observe it. Later on, every time the thought wanders or thinks about something else, you know it. Then you can observe it. Then here, the thought is

caught. It can't go out; then, gradually, the mind becomes concentrated on each object which you are noting or observing.

However, thought is not your enemy. Thought is your friend. If you feel aversion to thoughts you are attached to it, because whenever thoughts come, you are disappointed, "Oh, many thoughts, I can't concentrate well". In this way, you are attached to thoughts in terms of aversion. You think you don't like thoughts, but you like it. Then thoughts come very often. So, actually thoughts are not your enemy. Thoughts are your friend. Why? If there are no thoughts, you have lost the good opportunity to realize them in their true nature. Because there is thought. there is a good opportunity to observe it and to realize it in its true nature. If you do not realize thought in its true nature, or if you do not realize thoughts as impermanent, suffering, and no-soul, no-self nature, you take it to be "me" or "I", a person, or a being. "I am thinking. My mind is wandering. I like this thinking". Sometimes very bad things appear in the mind but you like it. Then you are attached to it. Why? Because you do not observe it. Whenever it comes up if you observe it you come to realize it, at least you "see" it as just thought process. You do not take it to be a person or a being. You realize it as just a thought processes.

Later on, you come to realize that there is the thought process and there is the mind that notes it. You come to find that there is a dual process of mentality. Then, you won't identify either the thought process or the noting mind process with yourself, your person. It is at this stage that you have removed the idea of a person, a being, regarding this thought. That realization, that insight knowledge, is "given" to you by that thought process; so it is your "friend". If you do not have thought, you do not know thought; you do not realize it in its true nature, you will all the time identify the thought, whenever it arises, with "you", "yourself", your person. Then there is *sakkaya diṭṭhi, atta diṭṭhi* which is the cause of all kinds of mental defilements which make you suffer.

Therefore, you should have a proper attitude towards thought. What kind of attitude should you have? Yes, "it is my friend". When you think thought to be your enemy, you will fight it. Whenever you have a thinking mind or a wandering mind, you note, "thinking, thinking" (i.e., noting too quickly and with aversion). You fight it because you think it is your enemy. Actually, it is not an enemy, it is your friend. Whenever it comes, accept it, welcome it and observe it until it has disappeared, calmly and steadily but firmly. Later on, when it has disappeared, you return to the primary object and note as usual. It will come again. It doesn't matter. Accept it, observe it firmly, precisely and closely. Then it will disappear.

Then, later on, you come to realize that this thought doesn't last a long time. It arises, and when observed or noted, it passes away. Sometimes, when thought comes, note, "thinking" and it goes away. Then another thought comes. Note "thinking", and it goes away. Then you come to realize that these thoughts are not permanent; they are impermanent. So, when you feel friendly with the thoughts but not attached to them, it is the right attitude to the thoughts. No thoughts disappoint you. No thoughts disturb you. Then, when you are able to observe these thoughts whenever they arise, gradually the thoughts become less and less, weaker and weaker. When thought becomes less, the mind becomes concentrated more and more deeply. Then, later on, the mind becomes calm, it doesn't go out, it doesn't wander. Then the mind is concentrated on the object which is observed: "lifting, pushing, dropping" or "rising, falling sitting, touching". Then concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then you have purification of mind (*cittā visuddhi*).

When you are able to get through this "gate" your meditation is very satisfactory. You are hopeful. As soon as you have got through this "gate", you realize mental and physical processes in their true nature. You begin to attain insight knowledges, the first one, then the second, then the third and so on. Before you reach this "gate" you have to try, you have to exert, you have

to strive the utmost, especially by being mindful of daily activities. The Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw laid stress on awareness of daily activities. If he saw a meditator slowing down all actions and movements, sitting down slowly before him, arranging hands and legs slowly, bowing down very, very slowly, the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw was very pleased with this meditator. He said, "Such a meditator cannot miss any *maggā* or *phāla*". So, the most important thing is to note mental states, emotional states, thoughts, ideas, opinions, mental images and so on. The second most important factor is to be aware of all daily activities in more and more detail, as much as possible, slowing down all actions and movements.

Meditation Instructions, contd.

Vipassanā, or insight meditation, is based on Four Foundations of Mindfulness, namely *kayanupassana satipatthana* (mindfulness of body), *vedananupassana satipatthana* (mindfulness of feeling or sensation), *cittanupassana satipatthana* (mindfulness of consciousness), and *dhammanupassana satipatthana* (mindfulness of mind objects). Mind objects here means that the mind itself is the object of meditation; such as the thinking mind, the distracted mind, the seeing mind, and so on. In other words, the meditator must observe or note any bodily or mental phenomena which are arising distinctly at the moment.

As for *vedananupassana satipatthana*, mindfulness of feeling or sensation, it may be divided into five: *sūkha-vedāna, somanassa-vedāna, dukkhā-vedāna, domanassa-vedāna*, and *upekkhā-vedāna. Sukha-vedāna* is pleasant sensation produced by physical phenomena or dependent on physical processes. *Somanassa-vedāna* is also pleasant sensation, but it is produced by the mind, that is, mental states or emotional states; it is pleasant sensation dependent on mental processes. *Dukkha-vedāna* means that unpleasant sensation produced by physical phenomena or dependent on physical processes. *Domanassa-vedāna* is unpleasant sensation dependent on mental processes, that is, mental states or emotional states. *Upekkha-vedāna* is of only one type,

not two; it is neutral mental (not physical) sensation dependent on mental states.

Most of the time, meditators have to deal with *dukkhā-vedāna*, unpleasant physical sensation, such as pain, stiffening, itching, numbness, and so on. However, there may be some occasions when you have pleasant mental sensations. In an advanced stage of meditation, when concentration is good and mindfulness is clear, you may be able to realize every movement of the body very clearly. As a result you feel happy, you get *pīti* or joy. Attachment to it may arise. At that time you experience pleasant mental sensation and you should note it as, "pleasant, pleasant" or "good, good". When the noting mind becomes continuous and powerful, there is no time for attachment to arise in between these notings. After attachment has gone, you can proceed with your meditational experience to higher stages of insight.

If you have reached the eleventh stage of insight knowledge, known as knowledge of equanimity, there is neither *dukkhā* nor *sūkha*, neither unhappiness nor happiness. The mind is deeply concentrated on the object, it never goes out; it is observing and realizing the appearance and disappearance of mental and physical phenomena which are arising and passing away. At that time the noting mind is like an elastic; even though you send the mind to a pleasurable object you like, it does not go to that object. At that time you need not put conscious effort into the noting but the noting is steady and energetic by itself. At that stage, neutral sensation or equanimity is very distinct to meditators. Apart from that stage neutral sensation is not so distinct that they can note it.

At the initial stage, however, most of the time meditators have to deal with unpleasant physical sensation or *dukkhā-vedāna*. Unpleasant sensation, physical or mental, is easy to note. Pleasant sensation, either physical or mental, is easy to note, because the nature of a human being is to enjoy any pleasurable thing. When a meditator finds something pleasurable, he enjoys it and forgets to note. Therefore, you have to remind

yourself and be determined to note these sensations whenever they arise. Pain is a meditator's close "friend". Pain is the key to the door of Nibbāna, because most of the time it is distinct, enabling the meditator to realize it in its true nature.

The purpose of observing or noting *vedāna-khanda*, the aggregate of feelings, is to realize it in its true nature. However, there are some meditators who do not understand this well. Whenever they have to note painful sensation their aim is to make it stop or disappear. When they are not able to make it disappear, though they have observed or noted it for one hour or one and a half hours, they become disappointed. Their aim is to make it go away, not to realize it. The right aim of noting pain is to realize it in its true nature, that is, to realize the specific and general characteristics of the painful sensation.

The Pāli word for specific or individual characteristics is *sabbhava-lakkhaṇa*, and for general or common characteristics it is *samanna-lakkhaṇa*. "*Sabbhava*" is specific or individual, "*samanna*" is general or common and "*lakkhaṇa*" is characteristic. When we have attained purification of mind (*cittā-visuddhi*) we gradually come to realize the specific or individual characteristics of physical and mental processes which are observed. The more our mind is concentrated on the object, the sharper and more penetrating is the insight.

Therefore, if any unpleasant physical feelings arise, you must observe them by noting mentally, "pain, pain", "stiffening, stiffening", "itching, itching" or "aching, aching" as the case may be. Labelling, or mental noting, is not vital. It only helps to focus the mind on the actual object of observation, in this case unpleasant physical feelings. When meditation is in an advanced stage, you need not label or make a mental note; you just watch or are mindful of the object as it is. Then, gradually, your concentration on painful sensation becomes deeper and you feel the painful sensation more deeply. You feel the intensity of the painful sensation increasing. You may think that it has become more severe, but actually it has not; it exists as it is.

You know it more and more clearly because of good concentration. When you note it repeatedly, attentively, and energetically the mind becomes more concentrated on it. The more the mind becomes concentrated, the more penetrating the knowledge or insight becomes. With deep concentration you know the pain more deeply and clearly. It only seems that the pain has become more severe.

If you are patient with the pain by observing it steadily and sometimes attentively, concentration becomes much better. Gradually, you do not feel that painful sensation but you realize just painful sensation. Then, even though there is pain while you are practising sitting meditation, you do not think, "I am in pain, I feel pain", but you come to realize that, "Painful sensation is being observed or noted". There is pain and the mind that knows it. You are not even aware of the location of the pain. Sometimes you are also not aware of the bodily form. What you are realizing is just painful sensation and the mind that notes it. In the whole world only this dual process of feeling phenomena and cognizing phenomena really exists. As a result, you do not identify pain with yourself; pain is just pain, neither an "I" nor a "you", nor a person, nor a being. That insight knowledge which discerns the nature of pain exterminates the idea of personality, individuality, self or soul. It means that that you have realized the true nature of pain and the mind that notes it. The purpose of observing pain is to rightly understand the individual characteristic of painful sensation. The individual characteristic of unpleasant physical sensation is the experiencing of an undesirable tangible thing or object. The individual characteristic of the noting mind is cognizing only.

When you proceed to practise with clear mindfulness and deep concentration, you continue to realize some waves of painful sensation arise. You note it and it subsides. Then another wave of painful sensation comes up, you note it, and it disappears. Then another wave and another arise, a series of waves of painful sensation come up one after another, and disappear

one after another. It means that you are realizing one of the general or common characteristics of painful sensation, that is impermanence (*aniccā*).

Sometimes you may feel pain to be very strong. Your noting mind is also very powerful and concentration is deep enough, but the pain does not go away. You cannot find any waves of sensation. What you are finding is the volume of the painful sensation. At times you may see just the size of the painful area. When you put much more effort in the noting, being patient with it, gradually the mind becomes more concentrated. It gathers to the centre of the pain until it pinpoints the pain. The feeling of painful sensation is very strong and severe at that time. However, you do not withdraw your noting mind. You proceed, noting, "pain, pain". Then the noting mind pierces into the centre of the painful sensation and the pain explodes or disintegrates. You are realizing the disintegration, dispersing or explosion of the pain by means of your noting mind. You do not feel the pain as painful, you just realize; you just know, you just see it, that is all. That means that also you are realizing one of the common or general characteristics of painful sensation, impermanence or *aniccā*.

There are some other ways in which you realize painful sensation. Sometimes when you note pain with good concentration, the pain suddenly disappears. Then another pain comes up in another place and you note it. It instantly passes away. Again another pain comes up, you note it and it also instantly passes away. At that time your concentration is very good. Meditators who have such experiences may be very pleased or happy with the noting of pain because they see it disappearing, disappearing, disappearing. That is also a very good experience. It means insight knowledge of the general characteristics of painful sensation.

Occasionally beginners may feel the pain to become unbearable; it reaches beyond the meditator's ability to endure. The meditator may desire to change position so that he may relieve

that pain. Meditators who can sit for at least thirty minutes should not change position even once in a sitting. Instead, they should get up and practise walking meditation. Changing position in a sitting breaks your concentration. When you change your position very often, this will become a habit. Then,because the changing of the position has become habitual, even when your meditation experience is at an advanced stage, you may feel like changing position although you do not have any unbearable pain. However, if a meditator is still not able to sit at least thirty minutes for some physical reason, he may change position once to relieve the pain; but only once, not twice. He should then continue to sit, observing any physical or mental phenomena which are predominant at that moment.

Suppose, a beginning meditator has been sitting for ten minutes and feels an unbearable painful sensation, the meditator can change position since he cannot sit even for half an hour. Changing position must be done mindfully. When the meditator wants to change position he should note, using such labels as, "wanting, wanting" or "intending, intending"; this is a mental process which must be observed. As he stretches out the leg he should note, "stretching, stretching". When he shifts the body, he should note, "shifting, shifting" or "moving, moving". When he bends the leg, "bending, bending", as the case may be. What is important is that the meditator is mindful of all the intentions and bodily movements involved in changing the sitting position. Labelling is a means to keep the mind focused on the object of meditation. After he has changed position, he should continue by observing any physical or mental phenomena which are predominant. After five or ten minutes of meditation, he may feel very intense pain again. Then he must patiently observe the pain as long as he can. When he feels it to be unbearable, he should get up mindfully and practise walking meditation.

There is another way to deal with pain. Suppose a meditator has been sitting for 45 minutes and an unbearable pain arises, and he wants to change position. The instruction in this case

is that a meditator should not change position, but should get up mindfully and practise walking meditation because he is already able to sit for more than half an hour without changing position. If the meditator is unwilling to walk because he has sat for just 45 minutes, he may avoid the pain and direct attention to the attributes of the Buddha, reflecting on them. This is called *buddhanusati bhāvana* or recollection of the Buddha's attributes, one of the *samathā* or concentration meditations. At that time the meditator feels less pain. Actually, there is not less pain. When the mind is absorbed in the recollection of the Buddha's attributes, the mind does not know the pain well, so that the meditator thinks that there is less pain. That is avoiding the pain.

The Buddha taught the above technique of shifting from *vipassanā* to *samathā* meditation in the Bikkhunupassaya Sutra or the Discourse on the Monastery where Bikkhunis (Nuns) live. If you have a lot of distractions, you are depressed, you are reluctant, you feel lazy, you are overwhelmed by sloth and torpor, or you are worried about something else, you cannot concentrate well. In this state you cannot make any progress in *vipassanā* meditation. So, to make progress, you should change to *samathā* meditation temporarily. You may choose any *samathā* meditation object which makes you glad or joyous, such as recollecting the Buddha's attributes, the Dhamma's attributes, the Sangha's attributes, your *dana* (generosity), your *sila* (purified moral conduct), or *mettā bhāvana* (loving kindness meditation) and concentrate on it. Then, when your mind is well concentrated on any of these meditation objects, you feel peaceful and happy, your mind is clear. Those distractions will not come to you because your mind is very pleased with your meditation and is concentrated to a certain extent. After that, you can switch back to *vipassanā* meditation and observe any physical or mental phenomena as they are. When you note or observe any of your *vipassanā* meditation objects, you can be successful. That type of meditation is named by the Buddha "*panidaya bhāvana*". Some-

times you may have to use this technique if you cannot improve in your *vipassanā* meditation.

May all of you be able to realize painful sensation in both its specific and general characteristics and attain path (*maggā*) and fruition (*phala*) knowledge.

Dependent Origination Paṭiccasamuppāda[10]

The purpose of *samathā* meditation is to attain higher concentration of mind. We call it *jhāna* concentration. Sometimes *appana* concentration, *appana samādhi, jhāna* concentration is translated as fixedness concentration. *Appana samādhi* is translated as absorption concentration. Both are in the same sense. When the mind is well concentrated on a single object of meditation, it is fixed firmly on the object so it is called fixedness concentration. It is totally absorbed into the object of meditation, so it is called absorption concentration, *appana samādhi*. Some *samathā* meditators aim at the attainment of supernormal power, or psychical power, through deep concentration of mind by means of *samathā* meditation, such as some of the hermits in ancient times, who went into a forest and practised *samathā* meditation with a view to attaining psychical power or supernormal power through deep concentration of mind.

Though *samathā* meditators have attained those psychical powers or supernormal powers, they are unable to realize the three characteristics of mental and physical processes, *aniccā*, *dukkhā* and *anattā*, because their purpose is to have deep concentration of mind and not to realize any physical or mental phenomena. There is also another reason why a *samathā* meditator

[10] 10th August, 1992.

is unable to realize *nāma* and *rūpa*: if your mind is very deeply concentrated on the object of meditation you are unable to realize the body-mind process in its true nature because concentration is too deep to realize mental and physical processes.

The purpose of *vipassanā* meditation is to attain Nibbāna, or deliverance through destruction of all mental defilements, by means of right understanding of the body-mind process. So, *vipassanā* meditators, insight meditators, first of all must have some degree of concentration, not too deep, some degree of concentration on which they will build up the insight knowledge that penetrates into the true nature of mental and physical phenomena. This insight knowledge will destroy the mental defilements. For a *vipassanā* meditator, if he hasn't yet attain any path or fruition knowledge, he is still able to remove some of the mental defilements, (*kilesas*) partially, not completely.

There are three types of removal or abandonment of *kilesā*, mental defilements. We call three types of *pahana*. *Pahana* here means removal, abandonment, destruction, or elimination. There are actually five kinds of removal but here, to make it easy for you, I will explain only three kinds of removal. The first one, *tadanga pahana*, means partial removal or abandonment of *kilesā*. The second one is *vikkhambhana pahana*, which means temporary removal or abandonment of *kilesā*. The third one is *samuccheda pahanaya*, which means complete removal or abandonment of *kilesā*. Out of these three, partial removal, or abandonment of mental defilements, is done by *vipassanā ñana*, insight knowledge. Temporary removal or abandonment of *kilesā* is done by deep concentration, *samādhi*. Complete removal or abandonment of *kilesā* is done by path knowledge, enlightenment.

When you practise *vipassanā* meditation, and your mindfulness becomes continuous and constant, the mind becomes concentrated gradually. The more continuous your mindfulness becomes, the deeper concentration you have, the clearer insight knowledge becomes. With a deeper concentration, your insight

knowledge becomes sharp and penetrating. Then it realizes bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature.

Suppose, you hear a song which is very sweet and you like it. Then, if you hear that song and if you enjoy it, what will happen? You feel it pleasant, "Ah, very sweet. I like it". That pleasant feeling arises dependent on your ears and the sweet song. Dependent on your ears and the sweet song, there arises pleasant feeling about the song. Then, when you are not able to observe and note it as, "hearing, hearing", you will enjoy it more and more. When you enjoy it more and more, your pleasant feeling about the sweet song becomes more and more powerful. When the pleasant feeling becomes more powerful, there arises a desire to hear it, sometimes to meet the singer through hearing of the song. So, hearing the sweet song, you are not able to just note it as, "hearing, hearing" but you enjoy it. Then that desire to meet the singer or listen to the song repeatedly arises, dependent on pleasant feeling about the sweet song. Why? Because you could not note it, you could not observe it. You could not note it as, "hearing, hearing".

Then the desire to hear the song or to meet the singer becomes stronger and stronger. Then you do something to meet the singer. Maybe you go to him or her. That deed may be good or bad, wholesome or unwholesome. When you meet him or her you may talk about something. That talk may be wholesome or unwholesome. It is called verbal action, *vaci kammā* in Pāli. That verbal action may be good or bad, wholesome or unwholesome. That verbal action arises dependent on the strong desire which arises dependent on the ordinary desire to see the singer or to hear the song.

Here, why do you have this chain of *kilesā* arising one after another? Because you do not notice the hearing or you are not aware of it. This pleasant feeling about the song arises dependent on your ears and the sweet song. It means *saḷāyatana paccaya phasso, phassā paccaya vedāna*, dependent origination.

Phassa paccaya vedāna, because you have ears, the ears contact the song; that contact is called *phassā*. It is conditioned by the ears and the song. Because of contact there arises pleasant or unpleasant feeling, that is *vedāna*. *Phassa paccaya vedāna*, this pleasant feeling is conditioned through contact.

Because of pleasant feeling you have desire to meet the singer or to hear the song repeatedly. That desire is caused by the pleasant feeling. *Vedana paccaya taṇha* in Pāli. The desire is conditioned by the pleasant feeling.

Then, when the desire is not overcome by noting it or by being aware of it, there arises a stronger desire. The stronger desire is called grasping, *upādāna*. You grasp it, you never release it, you grasp it firmly. The grasping is caused by the desire. *Tanha paccaya upādāna* in Pāli.

The grasping makes you do something to achieve what is grasped. That deed or action is caused by the grasping. So, the action or deed arises dependent on grasping or the action or deed is conditioned by grasping. *Upadana paccaya bhavo*. *Bhava* here means action or deed.

Because of that action, you are reborn again. That rebirth is caused by the action you did in the previous existence. It means *bhāva paccaya jāti*. *Jāti* means rebirth. The rebirth is conditioned by the action or deed in the previous existence, *bhāva paccaya jāti*.

When you are reborn, you are sure to undergo decay, to be old and to die. This old age and death is caused by that rebirth. In other words, old age and death are conditioned by rebirth. *Jāti paccaya jara māraṇā*. *Jara* means old age, *māraṇā* means death.

Then there is much suffering, both physical and mental, before you die because of rebirth. In this way, you have to have a great deal of suffering because you did not note the song or the consciousness of hearing as, "hearing, hearing". Do you follow this dependent origination, *paṭiccasamuppāda*? Because you have ears, the ears contact the song. Then because of that contact you have pleasant feeling about the song. *Salayatana pac-*

caya phasso. Phassa paccaya vedāna. Salayatana here means six sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind). Because you have these six sense organs (in the case the ear organ), you have contact with the song. So, that contact arises dependent on the ears, one of the six organs. It means *saḷāyatana paccaya phasso. Phasso* means contact. The contact is conditioned by the six sense organs. When the ears contacts the song, there arises the consciousness of hearing. Though you have ears, if there is no song or voice, there won't be any contact. Because you have ears and there is a song there is contact. The ears contact the sound. Because of that contact there arises consciousness of hearing.

That consciousness of hearing has its associates, mental consciousness which are *saññā* (perception), *vedāna* (feeling, sensation), *manasikara* (attention), *cetana* (volition), *phassā* (contact), *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness) and *jivitindriya* (vitality, psychic life). Hence, one of the mental concomitants, which arise together with the consciousness of hearing is feeling. It is very distinct, more powerful than the other mental concomitants. As soon as you hear the song, you must observe it, "hearing, hearing", attentively, energetically, and somewhat quickly, so that your noting mind becomes more and more powerful and overwhelms the consciousness of hearing. The consciousness couldn't hear the song very clearly. So, there won't arise any judgement. Consciousness can't judge if the song is good or bad because it can't grasp the song very well. Why? Because the noting mind disturbs it and overwhelms it.

You note, "Hearing, hearing". Then, the hearing is not able to know the object very well and it can't judge if it is good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant. Even though there is contact, there won't arise any pleasant or unpleasant feeling. That feeling is removed by the noting mind, mindfulness. Because of being mindful of what you are hearing, there arises no pleasant or unpleasant feeling. It means that the feeling is removed or made weak

by the constant and powerful mindfulness. There cannot arise pleasant feeling.

Because there is no pleasant or unpleasant feeling, you don't have any desire for the song or the singer.

Because there is no desire there won't be any grasping.

Because there is no grasping, there won't arise any action or deed.

Because there is no action or deed, you won't be reborn again (i.e., regarding this consciousness of hearing). Then your rebirth stops here. Why? Because when you hear the song you note it, you observe it, you are mindful of it.

Then, all kinds of suffering cease to exist here. You suffer no more. Why? Because you are mindful of it, you are aware of what you hear as, "hearing, hearing". Because you have ears and there is a song you have contact, but you observe it, you note it, "hearing, hearing". By means of mindfulness, by the power of mindfulness, your mind couldn't judge the song or the object to be good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, so there is no pleasant or unpleasant feeling.

Because there is no pleasant or unpleasant feeling, there won't arise any desire at all to meet the singer or to hear the song. *Vedāna nirodhā taṇha nirodhā.*

Because of the absence of feeling or sensation there is no desire arising.

Because of the absence of desire, there is no grasping at all. *Taṇha nirodhā upādāna nirodhā.*

Because of the absence of grasping, there won't arise any action or deed. *Upadana nirodhā bhāva nirodhā.*

Because of the absence of action or deed, good or bad, there won't arise any rebirth again. *Bhāva nirodhā jāti nirodha.*

Here, your mental and physical processes cease to exist. They go on any longer or any more. Your suffering ceases. You attain cessation of suffering. Do you follow? Why? Because you are mindful of what you hear. Because you notice what you hear. Because you are aware of what you hear or the consciousness of

hearing. When you are able to be mindful of the consciousness of hearing while you are hearing something, the consciousness or the mind cannot judge the object to be good or bad, pleasant, or unpleasant because of strong and powerful mindfulness.

It is called closing the door. What kind of door is closed? The ear door is closed. How is the ear door closed, with what? The ear door is closed with mindfulness. Then the enemy can't get in. Who is the enemy? *Taṇha* (*vedāna* or feeling is the forerunner). When you hear a sweet song, if your mindfulness becomes continuous, constant, and powerful, no defilement at all can enter into it. You are able to close your ears. So, mindfulness prevents mental defilements from coming into your mind through the door of the ear. Hence you have to observe any sound or voice, "hearing, hearing".

The same applies to the other five sense doors. When you see something, note, "seeing". That is closing the door of the eyes. When you hear something, note, "hearing". It is closing the door of the ear. When you smell any scent or odour, note, "smelling", closing the nose door. When you eat something, you should note all actions and the movements involved in the act of eating, noting, "taking", "opening the mouth", "putting into the mouth", "chewing", "tasting", and so on. When you observe every mental state or physical process, you cannot enjoy your food because the powerful mindfulness prevents mental defilements from coming into the tongue door.

Say, if you have a sweet taste while you are taking your food, note, "chewing, chewing", or "sweet, sweet". Then, when the mindfulness becomes powerful, you do not know the food as sweet any longer, because what you are realizing at that moment is that something is being chewed or something is being ground; the two jaws. Then you don't identify the taste with yourself. You don't identify the movement of the jaws with yourself. There are two things which are moving constantly and also there is something between these two things. That's all. Then you don't have any sweet taste. Because you don't have any

sweet taste, you don't have any desire to enjoy it. If your noting is more powerful and more detailed, gradually you want to vomit. Why? Because you have aversion to that food. Is it good? It is not good, because aversion is also one of the defilements, *dosā*. You must feel neutral feeling, without pleasantness or unpleasantness. If you feel pleasant you will have desire; if you feel unpleasant you will have aversion. So, your feeling must be neutral. To make it neutral, you must observe it. Then you don't know the food as good or bad; the food is not liked or disliked. That is closing of the tongue door.

It is called *indriyā saṃvarā*. *Indriya* means six sense doors or sense organs. *Samvara* means closing or blocking. You block the ear with mindfulness. Then none of the mental defilements will come into the mind through the ears because you blocked it. It is called closing of the six sense doors or blocking of the six sense doors. So, whatever you hear, note it as, "hearing"; whatever you see note it as, "seeing"; whatever you smell, note it as, "smelling"; whatever you taste, note it as, "tasting" or "chewing" and so on; whatever you touch, note it as, "touching"; whatever hardness you feel, note it as, "hard, hard"; whatever softness you feel, note it as, "soft, soft". Then there is no mental defilement at all, because you realize this is just the consciousness of touching.

With deeper concentration and clearer insight you may know the consciousness of hearing appearing and disappearing, arising and passing away. Then you come to realize the impermanence of the consciousness of hearing. Then you don't have any desire or aversion, no mental defilements at all. That is the purpose of *vipassanā* meditation. It means the attainment of the cessation of suffering through realization of mental and physical phenomena in their true nature. That is what *vipassanā* meditators aim at. *Samathā* meditators cannot realize any mental or physical phenomena, because their aim is to attain a higher degree of concentration.

In the beginning of this talk I have told you about three types of removal or abandonment. When you hear that sweet song, and if you observe it as, "hearing", you come to know that there is hearing and there is the object and the mind that notes it with deeper concentration. If you do not observe, "hearing", as I have explained, you have a desire for the song or to see the singer. That desire arises dependent on feeling or sensation. But when you are able to observe or to be mindful of what you are hearing, what you know is just this hearing, the song and the mind that notes it. This is *vipassanā ñana* which rightly understands the consciousness of hearing, the song (or the voice) and the mind that notes it. That right understanding or realization or insight knowledge removes some of the mental defilements which may arise when you are not able to observe it.

However, there are other mental defilements. Say, when you see something, there will arise the desire to see; when you taste something there will arise the desire to taste. This desire, *taṇha, lobhā* still remains untouched because what you are able to remove is the desire, *taṇha* which may arise when you are not able to observe hearing. So, some part of desire or *taṇha* is destroyed by the right understanding while you are observing hearing. That is partial removal or partial abandonment of *kilesā* by *vipassanā ñana*, insight knowledge.

May all of you be able to close all of your six sense doors by constant mindfulness and achieve your goal.

Anapanasati—Samathā or Vipassanā Meditation?

Anapanasati, respiration meditation is mentioned in the Visuddhimagga as *samathā* meditation. In the Visuddhimagga there are 40 subjects of *samathā* meditation. They are 10 *kasiṇa*, 10 *asubhā*, 10 *anussatī*, 4 *brahma vihara*, 4 formless spheres, perception of the loathsomeness of food, and analysis of the four elements. *Anapanasati* is one of the 10 recollection meditations.

Kasiṇa means entirely or whole. In other words, when a *kasiṇa* is an object of meditation you have to focus the whole circle of *kasiṇa* in your mind; but initially with the eyes. One can use these *kasiṇas* as objects of *samathā* meditation; *pavathi kasiṇa*, earth; *apo kasiṇa*, water; *tejo kasiṇa*, fire; *vayo kasiṇa*, wind or air; *aloka kasiṇa*, light; *lohita kasiṇa*, red; *nila kasiṇa*, blue; *pita kasiṇa*, yellow; *odata kasiṇa*, white; *akasa kasiṇa*, space. There are also 10 *asubhās*, meditations on impurity: meditation on a swollen corpse, discoloured corpse, dismembered corpse, skeleton and so on. Then there are 10 recollecting meditations, *anussatī*. The objects are: *buddhanussati*, recollection of the attributes of the Buddha; *dhammanussati*, recollection of the attributes of the Dhamma; *sanghanussati*, recollection of the attributes of the Sangha; *silanussati*, recollection of the attributes of the precepts you are observing; *caganussati*, recollection of the attributes and benefits of charity or offering you have done; *devatanussati*, rec-

ollection of heavenly beings; *maranasati*, mindfulness of death; *kayagatasati*, mindfulness of the body; *anapanasati*, mindfulness of breathing; and *upasamanussati*, recollection of peace.

Hence *anapanasati*, recollection or mindfulness of breathing is one of the 10 recollection meditations, *anussatī.* According to the Visuddhimagga, we take *anapanasati*, mindfulness of breathing to be a *samathā* meditation. But in the Maha Satipatthana Sutta, the Discourse on the Four Foundations of mindfulness, *anapanasat*i is mentioned as an object of *vipassanā* meditation too. The Maha Satipatthana Sutta begins with *anapanasati* as the object of *vipassanā* meditation. So, some scholars get puzzled about this meditation, whether it is *samathā* or *vipassanā* meditation, because in the Visuddhimagga it is mentioned as *samathā* and the Maha Satipatthana Sutta, mentioned it as *vipassanā.* In Maha Satipatthana Sutta the Buddha teaches us how to practise *anapanasati*, mindfulness of respiration. He mentions how a meditator sees the appearance and disappearance of the respiration and realize impermanence of respiration. So, it is mentioned in Maha Satipatthana Sutta as *vipassanā.*

What we should know is that the object of *samathā* meditation can either be *paññatti* or *paramattha. Paññatti* means concept, *paramattha* means absolute or ultimate reality. The object of *samathā* meditation may be a concept or ultimate reality. When we take *kasiṇa* as the object of *samathā* meditation, the object is just concept, not absolute reality. How?

Say, if we make a red *kasiṇa* as the object of *kasiṇa* meditation, you have to draw a red circle about the size of a plate on a wall or tree, about two feet from the floor so that your eyes can look at it easily. That red must be pure red without mixing with any colour. When you focus your mind on the red circle, you have to focus on the whole red circle, not on half or a quarter of the circle. So, it is called *kasiṇa*. Why? Because you want to concentrate your mind on the form of the circle. You need not know the red colour. You need not know the texture. What you should do

is to concentrate on the form of the circle very well, very deeply. You have to look at the whole circle and focus your mind on it.

Then, when your concentration is good enough, although you close your eyes you can see that red circle in your mind, that is the form of the circle. You concentrate on the red circle you see in your mind. That circle you see in your mind is called *patibhaga nimitta*. It means the *nimitta* which is similar to the circle on the wall. Some scholars translate it as "counterpart sign". The meditation is *samathā* meditation, so you need not realize any physical or material processes of the circle. What you need to do is to concentrate your mind on the whole circle and absorb the mind in it. That is why you see the red circle in your mind when your concentration is good enough. The red circle is a form, it's just a concept. The form is just concept, not ultimate reality. The circle you see in your mind is not absolute reality. It's just the thing which is created by your mind; so it's just a concept. In this case the object of *samathā* meditation is just concept, not ultimate reality.

When you practise *buddhanussati*, it is recollection of the chief attributes of the Buddha such as *araham, sammasambuddho, vijjacarana sampanno, sugato, lokavidū, anuttaro purisa damma sarathi, sattha deva manussanam, buddho, bhavaga*. Here, the object is reality, *paramattha*. Say, you reflect on the attribute, "*araham*". It means that the Buddha is worthy of honour because he has totally destroyed all mental defilements. To destroy these mental defilements he has attained the fourth stage of enlightenment, *arahatta maggā* and *sabbannuta*, omniscience. You have to concentrate on those qualities of the Buddha which destroy all mental defilements. These qualities are enlightenment and omniscience; so they are absolute reality, not a concept. If you repeatedly concentrate on these attributes, whenever the mind goes out you bring it back and reflect on these attributes. Then you get gradually concentrated. In this case, absolute reality, *paramattha* is the object of *samathā* meditation.

However, in *vipassanā* meditation every object of meditation must be absolute reality, ultimate reality, *paramattha*. In *vipassanā* meditation no concept can be the object of meditation. Concepts cannot be the object of *vipassanā* meditation because *vipassanā* meditators need to realize the specific characteristics and general characteristics of mental and physical phenomena which are absolute reality. So, the object must be either mental or physical processes which are ultimate reality. If concepts are the object of *vipassanā* meditation, *vipassanā* meditators can't realize any characteristics of mental and physical processes because one can't find any real characteristics in concepts. Concepts are made up by the mind.

Say, your name is Pannananda. Though you have died, if I memorize your name in my mind as Pannananda, the name is there in my mind. (Actually, Pannananda has gone.) Why? Because my mind memorizes it, creates it to exist. It means that name is just a concept because it is created, memorized or made up by the mind. So, every concept is not reality. They are things which are made up by the mind. So, they don't have any characteristics to realize.

Then, if the red circle is the object of meditation, we see the form of the circle in our mind and concentrate on it. Gradually our mind becomes more and more concentrated on the red circle we see in our mind. When the mind is totally absorbed in that circle, we say we have attained *jhāna*. That red circle is not reality, but made by the mind; so it's just a concept. It hasn't got any characteristics to realize. Even though you concentrate your mind on it for, say, one hundred years continuously, you can't realize any characteristics; because it is not an absolute reality, it's a mind-made thing, just a concept.

As to respiration meditation (*anapanasati*), it is mentioned in the Visuddhimagga as *samathā* meditation, concentration meditation. In the Maha Satipatthana Sutta it is mentioned as *vipassanā* meditation. How can we distinguish between the *vipassanā* aspect of respiration and the *samathā* aspect of respiration? If

we are mindful of the absolute reality of respiration, that will be *vipassanā* meditation. If we are mindful of the concept regarding respiration, it will be *samathā* meditation.

So, the Visuddhimagga mentions the method of concentration on the touching sensation whenever you breathe in or breathe out. When you concentrate your mind on the coming in and going out of the breath it is *samathā* meditation because, you have to concentrate on the coming in and going out, not on the wind or air. When it is coming in you note, "in"; when it is going out you note, "out". In, out—in, out". Your mind is not on the breathing air but on the "coming-in" and the "going-out". "Coming-in" and "going-out" is not ultimate reality.

Say, you come into the room through the door and go out of the room through the door. What is (this) coming in and going out, may we ask the question? It's neither you, nor a person. It's just "coming in" and "going out". It is just a concept. In the same way when you concentrate your mind on the coming in and going out of the breath, it's just a concept. So, the concept is the object of meditation in this case. So, it's *samathā* meditation. You can't realize any specific characteristics or general characteristics of coming-in and going-out because it's not reality. It's just concept, so it's *samathā* meditation.

But when you focus your mind on the touching point at the nostril whenever your breath comes in or goes out, it touches the nostrils. When you observe this touching sensation and be mindful of it, it's ultimate reality. That touching point is composed of the four primary material elements: *pathavi dhatu*—hardness and softness, *apo dhatu*—liquidity, cohesion, *tejo dhatu*—hot or cold, *vayo dhatu*—movement, motion. These four elements are there whenever you focus your mind on the touching sensation. So, the object is absolute reality. What can we call it, *samathā* or *vipassanā* meditation? *Vipassanā* meditation.

That is what the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw wrote about the difference between the *samathā* aspect and *vipassanā* aspect of respiration. I appreciate it very much. We can say that respira-

tion meditation is *vipassanā* meditation in accordance the with the Maha Satipatthana Sutta. And we can say that respiration is *samathā* meditation in accordance with the Visuddhimagga. It is very subtle and deep to differentiate between these two aspects of respiration meditation. I think those who have practised meditation very well can differentiate between these two aspects.

Sometimes, we have to concentrate on the coming in and going out of the breath as the object of meditation when the mind is too distracted; when we have a lot of thoughts. The Buddha said that when you have a lot of distractions and lots of thoughts, you should practise respiration meditation as *samathā* meditation, because respiration or breathing is, so to say, ever present as long as you are alive. It's easy for you to concentrate on it. That's why the Buddha teaches us to practise respiration meditation as *samathā* meditation when there are many thoughts.

But, according to my experience, *buddhanusati* and *mettā* meditations are the best ones for my meditators to concentrate on when they have a lot of thoughts. So, I teach them either *buddhanusati* or *mettā bhāvana*. *Buddhanusati* is somewhat difficult for those who have no knowledge of the Buddha's attributes. *Mettā* meditation is very easy; every meditator can do it. When they can concentrate on *mettā*, their mind becomes calm and tranquil. Then they very easily can switch to *vipassanā* meditation.

That's how you can differentiate between the two aspects of respiration meditation.

May all of you be able to differentiate between the two aspects of respiration meditation and practise your meditation accordingly and achieve the goal.

Mettā Bhāvana[11]

We are going to deal with *mettā bhāvana* briefly, so that everyone can practise *mettā* meditation as the base for *vipassanā* when it is necessary. In the Bikkhunupasaya Sutta, the Buddha said that while you are engaged in *vipassanā* meditation and if the mind is distracted a lot, or the mind is defiled with a lot of *kilesā*, when the mind becomes hot with *kilesā*, or when you are reluctant to proceed with your practise, you should take a pleasant object as the object of meditation, such as attributes of the Buddha, the Dhamma or the Sangha, your *dana*, or your *sila*. You have to take these pleasant things as the object of meditation and contemplate on it. Then you will be able to concentrate your mind gradually on these objects. You will feel happy, tranquil, peaceful and calm. At that moment, you should switch your practice to *vipassanā*. The Buddha called it *panidhaya bhāvana*. It means that your noting mind is placed on a pleasant object and then returns to *vipassanā* meditation.

One of the objects which the meditator should contemplate on when he has these undesirable things such as a lot of distractions, worries, sorrow, and much *kilesā* and reluctance, is the object of *mettā*. Very good. The attributes of the Buddha are also very good, but you need to have some knowledge of the attributes of the Buddha, so that you can reflect on them. Unless you have some knowledge of the attributes of the Buddha you

[11] November 1992.

can't reflect on them. But for *mettā* you need not have special knowledge of loving-kindness because *mettā* is the original nature of beings. It can be developed easily when you know the technique.

The Burmese use the word *mettā* for *taṇha*, attachment. When a man is in love with a girl it is said that he loves her. He has *mettā* for her. Actually, it is not *mettā*. It is attachment but *mettā* is used for *taṇha* in Burmese language. When we deliver a discourse on *mettā bhāvana* we have to clear it up; repeatedly distinguishing between the two characteristics of *mettā* and *taṇha*. *Taṇha* has the characteristic of clinging and also the nature of heat. *Mettā* has the characteristic of detachment with wishing the welfare of beings and making the mind calm and peaceful.

But for Westerners it is not a problem because they don't use *mettā* for *taṇha*. It is easy to explain. In 1979, when I conducted a meditation retreat for the Insight Meditation Society together with Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, one of lady meditator, about 30 years old, during the question and answer session, asked the question, "What is love?" How could I answer this question? No, I was helpless. I could have avoided this difficulty or dilemma by answering, "Love is God". But if I had answered this question in that way I would have been a Christian. So, I said, "You asked me what love is but I don't know love. I can explain to you loving-kindness". But what she wanted to know was love, not loving-kindness.

Mettā here means wishing the welfare of all living beings. *Hita kara puti lakkhaṇa mettā*. The meaning is that *mettā* has the characteristic of wishing the well-being of all living beings. The mental state which wishes all living beings to be happy and peaceful is *mettā*. When you develop the feeling or spirit of loving-kindness or *mettā* towards all living beings, that is called *mettā bhāvana*.

The idea that *mettā* can be transmitted to other living beings exists in Burma as well as in Sri Lanka, in the West and in India too, I think; some scholars use the word transmit: "You

should transmit your loving-kindness towards all living beings. That is *mettā bhāvana*", they say. Some of them use the word radiating. "You should radiate your loving-kindness towards all living beings". Unless you have fully developed loving-kindness in you, how can you transmit it to other living beings? How can you radiate it to other living beings? If you have the feeling or spirit of loving-kindness abundantly developed in you, you need not transmit it to other living beings because your mind itself is transmitting it to other living beings.

Say, when you wish the welfare of other living beings you have that *mettā* in you. When that *mettā* is in you, your face is very pleasant, expresses a happy mood and is clear, gracious, and glorious. With the power of *mettā*, loving-kindness, in you, anyone who meets you feels that. He is also happy at the sight of you. Your face looks peaceful, calm, and tranquil. The mind itself transmits. It is the power of loving-kindness towards living beings. But that idea you find in Burma too. Burmese people say, "Please send your *mettā* to so and so". Sometimes some laymen or laywomen, who are in distress for some reason, ask, "Venerable Sir, please send your *mettā* to me because I am in distress. I am in trouble". That is the idea of sending *mettā* to another person. So, whenever we say, "You must practise *mettā bhāvana*", some of them understand that you send *mettā* to other people.

Actually, developing loving-kindness is not to the other person but within you. However, that spirit of loving-kindness is developed through wishing the welfare of living beings, the other people. Without reflecting on the welfare of other persons or beings, you can't develop loving-kindness in you. It can only be developed through the reflection of the welfare of other beings. This point is misunderstood by some people. They think it means sending your *mettā* to the other person; but it is actually arousing *mettā* within you by reflecting on the welfare of people or living beings.

This is why we say, "*mettā bhāvana*". "*Bhāvana*" is development or culture, "*mettā*" is loving-kindness.

To develop loving-kindness in you, you have to take a person or group of persons or all living beings as the object of *mettā* meditation, reflecting on the welfare of all these living beings by saying,

> May all living beings be happy, peaceful and free from animosity, free from distress, affliction ...

and so on. In this way, you feel your loving-kindness towards these persons and beings. So, by practising *mettā* meditation, developing loving-kindness in you, you feel happy, calm, and peaceful. Your mind is concentrated, stable, pliable, and malleable. These are the benefits, or results, of *mettā* developed within you. If you then switch to *vipassanā* meditation, you can concentrate on the object of *vipassanā* meditation easily, because you have concentrated your mind by means of *mettā* meditation to a certain extent. You already have attained concentration. So, that concentration should be channelled to *vipassanā* meditation.

When we develop loving-kindness in us, the loving-kindness is of two types; one is specific loving-kindness and the other is non-specific loving-kindness. When specific *mettā* the chosen object, we wish the welfare of the person who is specified. So, my loving-kindness is directed towards it. Then I wish the welfare of this person only, not anther person. If I choose U Samiddhi as the object of meditation, I reflect on his welfare, peace, and happiness:

> May U Samiddhi be happy, peaceful, free from animosity, distress, and affliction. May he be prosperous in the Dhamma. May he be able to attain enlightenment ...

and so on. I reflect only on his welfare, not some other person's. That is specific development of *mettā*, loving-kindness.

The non-specific development of loving-kindness is reflecting upon the welfare of all living beings: animals, Devas, Brahmas, Petas, hungry ghosts, all living beings are included. I reflect upon their welfare and say:

> May all living beings be happy and peaceful. May all living beings be free from animosity. May all living beings be free from distress and affliction. May all living beings be prosperous ...

and so on. Then my *mettā* is not specified. This is development of unspecified loving-kindness. Unspecified loving-kindness is called *anodhisa mettā* in Pāli. Specific loving-kindness is called *odhisa mettā*.

The objects of unspecified *mettā* are all living beings so it is difficult for us to concentrate our mind well on all these living beings. If you want to develop loving-kindness it is better for you to focus your mind on all living beings, reflecting on the welfare of all living beings. It is easy but you can't concentrate well. But you feel the loving-kindness in you. You feel happy and peaceful. You can't concentrate very well on the object of meditation because the object is in many different objects.

When you want to concentrate well by means of *mettā* meditation, you should develop specific loving-kindness, taking a person as the object of meditation, reflecting on his welfare only. Then, when you develop specific loving-kindness towards any person or any group of persons, the commentary says that you should not direct your loving-kindness towards a very dearly loved person in the beginning, because if you take a very loved person as the object of meditation in the beginning, you are not yet skilled in developing loving-kindness and you can't concentrate well. Sometimes you may think about his misfortune, his mental or physical suffering. As a result, you may feel unhappy about his misfortune, his mishap, his suffering in any way. The text says, you may feel as if you are crying because of his suf-

fering. So, the commentary says, that is why you should not develop a very loved person as the object of meditation.

Another one is a neutral one. You do not love nor hate him, but he is an acquaintance of yours. Whenever you go to your work you come across him on the road. "Ah, this person is also going to work, I am also going to work". Then, later on, he becomes your acquaintance. He knows you and you know him, that's all. You do not associate with him in any way. You do not go to his house and he doesn't go to yours but on the way to work you see him and he sees you, so you two become acquainted. That is the neutral person.

In England a rich Burmese man, whose name is U Mya Saw, bought a very big house together with a plot of 30 acres. We conducted a meditation retreat in his house in 1979-80. His office is in London but he lived in Oxford. Everyday he went to his office by train, in the same compartment and in the same seat. In the same way an Englishman also took the seat opposite him, the same compartment. Everyday they saw each other but they did not become acquaintances. He said he went by train for 10 years.

In 1981, I conducted a meditation retreat in Northern England, the Manjusri Institute near Ebersten, a country town. Three or four old English women came to the retreat and listened to the Dhamma talk and talked with us almost every day. One day one of the old women said that she had been living in London for 20 years but she did not know her neighbours. Her neighbours also did not know her. Then when she moved to Ebersten, in 5 years time she knew almost all the people in the town. She said, "Country life is very good, urban life is very bad".

Acquaintance should not be the first object of loving-kindness because the commentary says, that if you put the neutral person in the place of the beloved person it is difficult for you to have loving-kindness. You would get tired. That is what the commentary says. So, you must not develop loving-kindness towards a neutral person as the object of meditation in the beginning. But later on, when you are skilled in the development

of loving-kindness, you can take him also as the object of meditation. You can do it very easily .

Then there is the hostile person, which should also not be developed as the object of meditation in the beginning. He should not be the first object of loving-kindness because when you reflect on his welfare, you may not be able to reflect on his welfare but you may reflect on his defects and also the insult or harm he did to you. Instead of *mettā*, anger or hatred will arise. So, the hostile person should not be the first object of meditation in specific loving-kindness.

The commentary says that you must never develop your loving-kindness towards the opposite sex. That is what the commentary, Visuddhimagga says. Very strange. It told the story of a man who developed loving-kindness towards his wife. That man was very willing to practise loving-kindness or *mettā* meditation, so he asked a monk who came to his house every day for alms round, "Venerable Sir, I want to practise *mettā* meditation. First of all whom shall I develop or direct my loving-kindness towards". The monk said, "Dayaka, first of all the person you love very much, should be the object of meditation".

Then, at night, prepared himself for loving-kindness meditation, cleaning himself and putting on new clothes, bowing down to the Buddha's statue and reflecting on the attributes of the Buddha. After that he sat in his room. He sat very comfortably and he looked for the object, "Whom do I love very much?" Then he remembered that he loved his wife very much and he thought that his wife must be the object of meditation. Then he developed his loving-kindness, reflecting upon the welfare of his wife, "May she be happy and peaceful, free from animosity" . And so on. In the beginning he felt loving-kindness to a certain extent. Later on loving-kindness became weaker and weaker and changed into another one. When he couldn't sit any longer, he got up. He had locked the door of his room, but he forgot that the door was locked; so the commentary says, he fought with the wall. But the commentary stops here. It doesn't describe the

later scene. So, the commentary says, this is why you should not develop your loving-kindness towards the opposite sex. But my students who practise this loving-kindness meditation can develop their loving-kindness towards the opposite sex very well. They are successful in developing loving-kindness towards the opposite sex.

One lady who was a superintendent at a bank came to practise first of all *vipassanā* meditation for two months. She got three months leave. After two months of *vipassanā* meditation, she practised *mettā* meditation one by one. First of all, the commentary says, you should direct your loving-kindness towards your preceptor or the person who is equivalent in quality to the preceptor, and so on. After that you direct your loving-kindness towards a beloved person, then a neutral person, then a hostile person. But you have to develop your loving-kindness very well until your mind becomes pliable and malleable so that you can direct it towards any person very easily. Only after that you change to another person. I instructed her to develop her loving-kindness towards these persons one after another.

After about 20 days of *mettā* meditation I told her, "Now you should direct your loving-kindness towards a hostile person. Do you have any hostile person?" Then she remembered that her senior officer was always finding fault with her. So, she was not happy with the officer. Then I told her to direct her loving-kindness towards that senior officer. She did; she was successful. After one week I told her to reflect upon the welfare of this senior officer and develop loving-kindness in her. She did. Then after that she returned home. One day she came to the centre and told me, "Venerable Sir, that senior officer has never come to my house before I practised my meditation. During my meditation retreat he came to my house and asked my brother whether I was well or not and so on. Two times he came to my house. When I returned to my office, his face was smiling. He did not find fault with me. He helped me very much".

The commentary says that the opposite sex should not be the object of meditation. However, not only she (the lady bank officer) but also three or four other meditators were successful in developing loving-kindness towards the opposite sex. Therefore, I judge that what the commentary says, is that before you are skilled in loving-kindness meditation, you should not try to develop *mettā* towards the opposite sex. But if you can master this meditation, you can develop loving-kindness towards any person.

The commentary also says that loving-kindness should not be directed towards a dead person. Then it further says that by developing loving-kindness towards that person, the meditator may not be able to attain either access or absorption concentration. So, that person should never be developed as a specific loving-kindness object. However, as for unspecified loving-kindness, that person may die here but be reborn in another existence, maybe in deva or Brahma or human world. Therefore, he is also one of the living beings you direct your loving-kindness towards.

Here, the commentary tells the story of a young monk who directed his loving-kindness towards his Upajhaya, preceptor. When that young monk developed loving-kindness, reflecting upon the welfare of his preceptor who lived in a distant village, he could not concentrate his mind very well on the object. He repeatedly tried in vain. Eventually this young monk went to a senior monk, an Arhat who lived near him and asked the reason. He put forth his problem to the senior monk. Then the senior monk said, "Please find out about the object". That's all. Then the young monk went to the village where his preceptor lived, only to know that his preceptor had already died. The commentary says that is why he couldn't concentrate very well on *mettā* because the object had already died.

Then, who should be the first object of loving-kindness meditation? The commentary says that the first object of loving-kindness meditation should be the preceptor or someone who is

respectable like a preceptor. Such a person should be the first object of loving-kindness meditation. You choose this person and direct your loving-kindness towards him, reflecting upon his welfare:

> May my preceptor be happy, peaceful, free from animosity, free from distress and affliction. May he be prosperous.

Then you can very easily develop the spirit of loving-kindness in you gradually and abundantly. You should repeat it again and again so that you can concentrate your mind well on the object of meditation and attain the 1st *jhāna*, the 2nd *jhāna*, and so on.

May all of you rightly understand the technique of loving-kindness meditation and its benefit and try to have in you the spirit of loving-kindness and, based on the concentration of loving-kindness, strive your best to practise *vipassanā* meditation and attain your goal.

Mettā Bhāvana, contd.

The commentary says that the first person of *mettā* meditation should be the preceptor or a person like the preceptor, who is much respected, who is endowed with *sīla, samādhi*, and *paññā* and with a purified mind. Such a person must be the first object of specific loving-kindness meditation because you feel respectful towards that person, because of his virtue and his generosity, and it's easier for you to have the spirit of loving-kindness in you, directing your loving-kindness towards this person.

However, the commentary says, first of all, that you should direct your loving-kindness, *mettā*. towards yourself, reflecting like this:

> May I be free from all kinds of mental and physical suffering. May I be happy. May I be peaceful. May I be free from distress. May I be free from afflictions. May I be free from hostility.

In this way, you should develop loving-kindness towards yourself for a moment, maybe for one or two minutes as an example. Only after that should you develop loving-kindness towards your preceptor or the respected person. Then you say in your mind,

> Just as I want to be free from hostility, may my preceptor also be free from hostility. Just as I want to be free from affliction, may my preceptor also be free

> from affliction. Just as I want to be free from distress, may my preceptor also be free from distress ...

and so on. But after one or two minutes, you should drop the first clause of the example, that is,

> Just as I want to be free from hostility ...

That clause should be dropped, but continue to say,

> May my preceptor be free from hostility, free from animosity, free from all kinds of suffering, free from both mental and physical suffering ...

and so on, directing your loving-kindness towards your preceptor or the respected person.

You should not try to visualize the face or the form of the body of the object. It may appear in your mind or it may not appear; but you should not try to visualize it in your mind because visualization of the face or the form of the body is not important. What is important is to feel *mettā* or loving-kindness in you, reflecting upon the virtues of this person and wishing his welfare. That is the most important point. Sometimes, if you try to visualize the person of the meditation object you find it difficult to visualize. So, you try hard; you try again and again. Then you become sweaty because you get tired. *Mettā* makes you feel happy, serene, peaceful, calm and composed. But here you become hot with tiredness and disappointment because you could not visualize the object. So, you need not visualize the object. It is not important.

But sometimes the object may appear in your mind in person. It's good, but if the face or bodily form of the object later disappears it doesn't matter. What matters is to feel the loving-kindness in you abundantly. So, whether you have his image in your mind or not it doesn't matter. What you should do is just

feel loving-kindness in you, reflecting upon the virtues of this person and wishing him to be happy, peaceful, prosperous and so on. So, in this way you develop your loving-kindness towards this person.

He may be with you in the same monastery or he may be in a village or town far away from you. It doesn't matter. What you should do is just to direct your loving-kindness towards him, wishing his welfare. Then gradually your mind will be able to concentrate on the welfare of this person which is the object of meditation; then you feel happy, serene, clear minded and tranquil. When this kind of feeling becomes stronger and stronger, your body may be suffused by a very soft sensation of serenity or tranquillity. Then you may sometimes feel goose pimples; sometimes you may feel your body is covered with a very soft blanket which is soaked in cold water; then you feel cold, calm and serene. Some meditators at this stage of meditation may pick up a blanket to cover themselves because they feel very cold even in the hot season such as April or May. So, *mettā* is the best meditation for Westerners to develop in the hot season. You need not go to Maymo (Pyin Oo Lwin) or Taungyi.

For some meditators, after 20 days of *mettā* meditation they feel like that their concentration is very good. As soon as they sit for meditation their concentration comes up. Sometimes they can visualize the object of *mettā* meditation. They have the image of the person who is the object of meditation, smiling, sometimes talking to them. Then they also respond to this smiling person or face. Unconsciously that meditator smiles in his sitting. The onlooker can also see his smile. Sometimes he is conscious that he is smiling. So, he feels ashamed of being looked at by the onlooker and he changes his facial expression. You see, if you see a smiling face you also feel like smiling because that smiling face radiates some force to you that affects your mind. Then your mind tends to smile. Then your face also smiles. That is what the commentary says when it describes the eleven benefits of *mettā* meditation.

One young monk was practising *mettā* meditation at that time in Chitalabota. In the past he had lived in a place for four months. After 4 months he moved to another place and lived there for another 4 months. In this way he lived in several places for just 4 months in each place. At the latest place, Chitalabota, he lived for 4 months too. After completion of the 4 months, he would leave the place on the next day. That night he was practising walking meditation. At the end of the walk there was a tree. It is called *manirukkha* in Pāli. When he was walking he heard a man crying very loudly. Then he asked, "Who is crying?" Then the person who was invisible to him said, "Venerable Sir, I am a deva who lives in this tree. I am the one who is crying".—"Why do you cry?"—"Because you are leaving tomorrow for another place, I feel very sad". Then the deva continued, "Before you came here and lived in this place, all devas around here were fighting each other, quarrelling. There was no unity at all, no peace at all. When you came and lived here, all devas loved each another. We lived very happily. There was no quarrelling, no fighting. So, I request you, Venerable Sir, continue to live here for the benefit of all the devas around here".

Here, when the commentary describes the benefits of loving-kindness meditation, it says that a meditator who practises loving-kindness meditation is loved by devas and human beings. Why? Because his mind is clear and serene. It affects his facial expression. His face is very glorious, gracious, smiling, calm and composed. Then everyone has the spirit of loving-kindness. That is why these devas loved each other, without quarrelling and without fighting. So, in Chanmyay Yeiktha too there is no fighting, no quarrelling because all of you develop loving-kindness. During *Vassa*, three months period, every *Uposatha* day 22nd and the last day of the Lunar month), all meditators who are practising at the centre and also those who come to observe the *sila*, including the school boys, have to develop loving-kindness meditation, observing 9 precepts and taking vegetarian food only. Do you know what is the 9th precept? Practise of *mettā*

meditation is the 9th precept. The whole compound is suffused with the feeling of loving-kindness. Then you are smiling.

The name of that young monk was Visakha. He had to continue to live in Chitalabota because not only one deva but all the other devas too begged him to continue to stay there; so he had to stay there. But after another 4 months, he again intended to move to another place. Again on the last night, the day before he left, many devas came to him, crying and requesting him to continue to stay there. In this way, he had to live there for all his life. He couldn't move to another place. So, loving-kindness meditation is so effective that all the devas who used to fight with each other became united and felt happy and peaceful with no fighting or quarrelling.

Then, when you have a great deal of loving-kindness in you, your mind becomes calm, concentrated and very subtle, very serene, composed, pliable, malleable. Then you should change to another object of meditation, not the same person. But before that, you should direct your loving-kindness towards this same person, the preceptor repeatedly: today, tomorrow, three days or 4 days. After you have such a feeling as tranquillity and serenity, you should change to another object, that is, another person in the same class. This means another respected and beloved person who is like a preceptor, who is endowed with virtues such as *sila, samādhi* and *paññ*a. Later on when you have the same feelings in you (calm, serene, tranquil, etc.) as a result of repeated reflection upon the welfare of the second respected person, you should change to another person (i.e., the third person in the respected person class). In this way, your object should be changed from one person to another until about 10 persons in the same class, the respected person.

Then in that case too when you feel concentrated, happy, rapture, tranquil and serene, at that time you have attained *jhāna* concentration; the 1st, 2nd and 3rd *jhāna*. In the 1st *jhāna* your mind is endowed with 5 factors: initial thought, sustained thought, rapture, happiness and one-pointedness. But in that

stage the noting mind is not very stable, it's shaky because it has that applied thought and sustained thought. When you pass the 1st stage of *jhāna*, you drop these two factors: applied thought and sustained thought. You feel rapture, happiness and one-pointedness, only three factors. In the 2nd stage of *jhāna*, your mind becomes more tranquil, more stable, firm. After you have passed this stage of *jhāna*, you drop rapture. Then you have happiness and one-pointedness, only two factors in the 3rd stage of *jhāna*.

Rapture is *pīti*. That *pīti* is not still. It shakes your mind, sometimes your body. When that *pīti* has been dropped, you attain the 3rd stage of *jhāna*, your mind is more stable, calm and more composed. Sometimes you may feel as if no one is around you, you are alone feeling joy and peace. That is the 3rd stage of *jhāna*. You can attain this even in directing your loving-kindness to the person of the first class. However, after that you should change your object to the second class person, that is the beloved ones. The one you love should be the object of meditation, but not yet in an advanced stage. It's fragile. If you direct your loving-kindness towards a beloved person such as your wife, the opposite sex, you may feel upset. Sometimes you may fight the wall. So, in this stage of meditation you should not direct your loving-kindness towards the opposite sex. It should be the same sex. Then you develop loving-kindness towards persons of the second class, changing one after another.

Sometimes, in a sitting you may direct your loving-kindness towards a person of the first class, say, for about 5 or 10 minutes, change to a person of the second class, say, about 10 or 15 minutes. Then change to another person of the first class. In this way, you can make loving-kindness very interesting and be very happy with it. In the same way those who are successful in attaining *jhāna* concentration by means of *samathā* meditation play with *jhāna*.

After the second class person (i.e., after about 10 persons) you go on the third class person, the neutral person. Develop

your loving-kindness one after another. After that the fourth class person, the hostile person. You are able to develop your loving-kindness towards this hostile person because at this time your meditational practice is matured. It is in an advanced stage. You can develop your loving-kindness towards this hostile person. No anger at all, just *mettā*, loving-kindness. At times you are very happy, because before you started to meditate on loving-kindness, whenever you thought about this person anger arose. You were angry with him in your mind. But now, in this stage of loving-kindness meditation, you feel no anger towards him. You feel loving-kindness towards him. This is success.

Then, after that, you should develop your loving-kindness towards all these persons in the four classes in one sitting, mixing them. Then, if you can do that and feel tranquil, serene, and peaceful, mix the objects in a different order. If you feel serene, tranquil, and concentrated you may be able to break the barrier. The barrier means that if you differentiate, "You are my beloved person, you are my hostile person, you are my enemy", there is a barrier in your mind.

If a bandit comes to us and asks for someone as a sacrifice to his deva for success in the robbery, "One of you must come with me. I'll sacrifice you to my deva in that tree. Who will come with me?", if your *mettā* meditation is successful in the advanced stage, you don't say, "Take him, take them". Instead you would say, "No, you take no one. Tell your deva I don't have anyone to sacrifice to you". This means that you have broken the barrier among these classes: "Me, you, hostile person, or beloved person", there is no barrier. It is called *sima sambheda*. *Sima* is barrier, *sambheda* is breaking. The commentary says that if you are able to break the barrier, you attained some *jhāna*. But the commentary takes a safe side. After you have completely and fully developed your loving-kindness towards all the four classes, it's sure you have attained access concentration. Actually, we can say you have attained *jhāna* concentration, absorption concentration too. No one disputes over it.

This is the specific development of loving-kindness meditation. But when you limit your object of meditation, say, to a village or a town, a state, a country, it is also specific loving-kindness meditation. Say, if you develop loving-kindness meditation towards the people of Burma it is also specific. Then you develop loving-kindness towards the people of the United States taking Clinton first. That is also loving-kindness meditation. We can do specific loving-kindness meditation with directional radiation too. You direct your loving-kindness towards, say, the people in the Eastern direction, Western direction, Southern direction and Northern direction. These are also specific loving-kindness meditations. How many directions can we direct in developing loving-kindness meditation? Ten. What are they? North, South, East, West, North-East, South-East, North-West, South-West, Nadir, Zenith. When you have directed your loving-kindness towards all these directions, you can direct your loving-kindness towards all living beings in the world, which is unspecific loving-kindness meditation. In this case you are able to concentrate your mind well because your meditational experience is in an advanced stage. So, you direct your loving-kindness towards all living beings. That is unspecific loving-kindness meditation.

The commentary says that if a meditator has reached this stage of concentrated mind developed by means of loving-kindness meditation, it is called *upacara samādhi*, access concentration or neighbouring concentration (to *jhāna* or absorption concentration). Then if he proceeds with his *mettā* meditation he can attain *jhāna* or absorption concentration very soon. First of all he enters into the first stage of concentration, then the second stage and then the third stage of concentration.

There are four stages of *jhāna* or absorption to be attained by a *samathā* meditator. Counted in another way, there are five stages of absorption concentration. If we take this *jhāna* as four stages of concentration the first stage has as its factors, initial thought (*vitaka*), sustained thought (*vicara*), rapture (*pīti*), hap-

piness (*sūkha*) and one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*). When you have attained the first stage of concentration, that concentration is not as deep and powerful as the other three higher stages of concentration, because it includes initial thought and sustained thought. Here, thought does not refer to what the common people know. Instead it means a mental state which directs or leads the mind to the object of meditation. This mental state is known as initial thought. When the noting mind goes out or wanders, one of the mental states which is included in the noting mind is *vitaka*, initial thought. It is distinct here because it directs the noting or developing mind to the object of meditation. *Vicara* or sustained thought is another factor that arises together with consciousness. It keeps directing the noting mind to the object of meditation so that the mind doesn't wander about. So, by the power of this *vitaka* and *vicara*, the mind becomes gradually concentrated on the object of meditation. When the concentration becomes deep, the mind gradually becomes calm, serene and composed. You feel a very tender feeling of rapture because of deep concentration on the object of meditation. Deep concentration means one-pointedness of mind, *ekaggatā*. So, in the 1st *jhāna*, because initial thought and sustained thought do their work together with this concentrated consciousness, the concentration is not so good. These two "thoughts" have the nature of shaking the mind to a certain extent.

When you proceed with your practice by developing loving-kindness towards the person whom you select as the object of meditation, concentration gradually becomes deeper and stronger. The consciousness becomes more deeply concentrated on the object of *mettā* meditation. There is no initial and sustained thought at this stage of concentration, because concentration has become deeper and stronger. This stage of concentration includes or consists of rapture, happiness and one-pointedness: *pīti, sūkha* and *ekaggatā*. This is the 2nd stage of *jhāna* or absorption concentration. However, rapture or *pīti* itself is not so stable, not firm enough. It also shakes and trem-

bles to a certain extent. When you proceed with your practice, concentration becomes deeper than in the 2nd stage of *jhāna*, almost absorbed into the object. So, in this stage of *jhāna*, there is no rapture. Then this 3rd stage of concentration consists of happiness and one-pointedness.

When you proceed with your practice, putting in more effort, concentration becomes deeper and deeper, more and more powerful. Then the noting mind is entirely absorbed into the object, so concentration is at its highest degree. It doesn't move, shake or tremble. It becomes quite quiet, calm, serene and tranquil, without any disturbances. In this stage of *jhāna*, the meditator need not make any effort to concentrate his mind on the object of meditation. The mind itself very readily concentrates on the object of meditation as if there is no effort on the part of the meditator. Equanimity or equilibrium arises in this 4th stage of *jhāna*. But the happiness has gone. There is no happiness, because in this stage the meditator doesn't feel happy or unhappy. So, he has the characteristic of equanimity or equilibrium and the deep concentration of mind. *Mettā* is the benevolence wishing the welfare of living beings or unselfish love. However, with equanimity or equilibrium, you don't have any love for any beings, so *mettā* meditators cannot attain this 4th stage of *jhāna* which consist of equanimity and one-pointedness of mind as its factors. Therefore, *mettā* meditators can only attain up to the three lower stages of *jhāna*. When you develop *mettā* well your body is suffused with a very tender feeling of rapture and happiness. The more you can develop the feeling of loving-kindness, the more the tender feeling of rapture and happiness you have. The 4th stage of *jhāna*, which has equanimity and one-pointedness mind as its factor, cannot be attained by a *mettā* meditator.

After the retreat you can develop this *mettā* meditation in your daily life, all day and night, because it changes your enemy into a friend; it changes your negative thoughts into positive

thoughts; it changes your negative emotional state into positive ones.

This is theoretical knowledge of *jhāna*, but practical knowledge of *jhāna* is not so difficult to attain if you take keen interest in the practice, after this retreat.

The Progress of Insight[12]

In the stage of insight knowledge of causality, that is *paccaya pariggaha ñana*, we still realize the specific or individual characteristics of bodily and mental processes together with their cause. It is at this stage that we can realize that the whole world arises dependent on cause and effect. This stage is also called purification by overcoming doubt, because you have thoroughly realized cause and effect of mental and physical phenomena through your personal experience of them.

When we proceed with our practice, mindfulness gradually becomes more powerful and more continuous, the concentration becomes deeper. Then we come to realize the common or general characteristics of the body-mind process at the third stage of insight knowledge. At the two previous stages of insight we realized the specific or individual characteristics of body-mind processes together with their cause. At this third stage of insight knowledge, we see the general or common characteristics of mental or physical phenomena more clearly. But at this stage we have a lot of pain. We suffer from a great deal of pain, physical discomfort, such as aching, stiffening, numbness, and so on.

When pain is observed we have to observe it very attentively. If it is possible, get into the centre of the pain and observe it. Then the pain becomes severer and severer. Before the first pain

[12] 30.9.92, excerpt.

has disappeared, there is another pain or physical discomfort arising. Then we have to note it, we have to deal with it with utmost energy, more energetically and attentively, going into the centre of the pain as much as possible. But before this pain has disappeared, another discomfort, say, itching sensation, comes up. This stage of insight knowledge is called *sammasana ñana*, knowledge of comprehension. The insight knowledge comprehends all three characteristics of existence of mental and physical phenomena.

What we know here is suffering. When we see the mental and physical processes more deeply and more clearly, we come to see the pain's explosion or disappearance, gradually disintegrating. After that there is another pain or discomfort. Then we note it, we deal with it energetically, observing it precisely. Gradually, discomfort decreases and then it passes away or disappears. Sometimes it abruptly disappears; sometimes it gradually disappears; sometimes it disintegrates gradually; sometimes it is dispersing, but what we know is the pain has gone. It is not everlasting. It is subject to impermanence too.

In this way, we come to realize impermanence of both unpleasant physical and mental sensation. We also come to realize *dukkhā*, suffering in the sense of *dukkhā*. But when we very clearly see the very swift arising and passing away of the unpleasant sensation in the pain which is very precisely and attentively observed, we come to realize the suffering, *dukkhā* in the sense of being constantly oppressed by arising and passing away. Then we don't have any idea of a person or a being, a self, or soul. We come to realize *anattā* too. There is no everlasting self or soul, person or being. What really exists is the process of mental and physical phenomena which are arising and passing away one after another.

At this stage of insight knowledge, that is insight knowledge of comprehension, *sammasana ñana*, we have to be patient with physical discomfort such as pain, aching, stiffening, numbness and so on. Unless we are patient with it, we do not see the inner

nature, that is, its common characteristics and we cannot overcome it. When we have thoroughly realized this suffering in the sense of impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature, physical discomfort gradually decreases and subsides. We don't have any painful sensation which is unbearable at the end of this third stage, your mind becomes fresh and energetic because there is no, or little, pain, which is not very severe or very strong, so you can concentrate your mind well on each mental state or physical process which is arising at that moment. Concentration becomes deeper and deeper, mindfulness becomes sharper too.

You come to realize the appearance and disappearance of mental states or physical processes which are observed at that moment very clearly. So, you have attained the fourth insight knowledge of arising and passing away of *nāma* and *rūpa*. But because you have passed the very difficult stage you become energetic, happy, peaceful. The more you note the object, the deeper the concentration becomes. Then, as the mind becomes calmer, you get into a stage of meditational experience where you feel everything is good. It is at this stage where you may be caught up and can't go up to the higher stages of insight knowledge.

May all of you strive your best not to be attached to any good or bad experience, realizing appearance and disappearance of everything, impermanence of mental and physical phenomena, and achieve your goal.

The Progress of Insight, contd.[13]

When you are able to comprehend the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and impersonal nature of mental and physical phenomena, it is called *sammasana ñana*, insight knowledge of comprehension. At this stage of insight knowledge your mind becomes concentrated to a large extent, and there are few thoughts occasionally arising, but you are able to observe them.

Because of deep concentration you can experience many different physical discomforts, *kayika dukkhā*, such as pain, aching, stiffening, numbness and so on; but you are able to realize or perceive every object which is noticed in three parts or three phases. You are able to realize the initial, the middle and the final phases. The movement may be soft; however soft or weak the movement may be, you are able to realize the initial phase of the rising movement, the middle phase of rising movement and the final phase of the rising movement.

The same with pain, aching, itching, and so on. So, you have a lot of pain in this stage of insight but you are able to manage it. You can deal with it very successfully. It means that though the pain, physical discomfort, may be severe, you are able to observe it; you are able to deal with it and realize it in its initial, middle and final phases. When you observe the painful sensation, you

[13] 05.10.92.

know it very well. You stay with it for some time, for some seconds or minutes. Before this first pain has disappeared, there arises another physical discomfort, stiffening, itchiness and so on. Then you have to go to the other physical discomfort and observe it. Before its disappearance, there arises another pain or discomfort. But, actually, you are realizing the initial, middle and final phases of the painful sensation too. But before you completely realize the final phases of the painful sensation, you have to shift to another painful sensation, stiffness or aching and observe it. Then it comes to you, it occurs to your mind that before one object has stopped, another object arises. Before it has stopped or disappeared, another object arises. In this way, the noting mind has to change its object from one object to another and observe it. Then there are many physical discomforts or many objects which are arising and then passing away.

In this way, you come to realize the impermanence of any mental process, physical process, feeling, or sensation which is noted. When you observe a series of many different painful sensations, one after another, you feel suffering, *dukkhā*. They have the nature of oppressing by constant arising and passing away. They do not obey the individual's wish. Even though the meditator wishes them not to arise, they arise. They are uncontrollable, they have an impersonal nature, *anattā*. In this way, you come to realize a mental or physical process which you are very attentively mindful of. This insight knowledge which realizes impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of mental and physical processes is called comprehension by direct experience, because you directly experience the arising and passing away of mental and physical processes. From that direct experience you judge that there is nothing which is everlasting. All is subject to impermanence.

This comprehending insight knowledge is called the knowledge by direct experience of mental and physical processes which is presently being observed. It is called *pacceka ñana*. But here *sammasana ñana* has another sense, which is knowledge by

inference or knowledge by reflection upon the actual experience of the object or phenomena. So, when you directly experience the arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, when you see it very clearly, sometimes you reflect upon the actual experience of impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature. Then you perceive the impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature of the other mental and physical processes, which are not yet observed, by inference from what you have experienced presently with direct experience of phenomena.

You come to judge that this mental or physical process which is observed is subject to impermanence. Other mental or physical processes which are not presently observed, are subject to impermanence in the same manner. All mental states or physical processes in the past, at present, and in the future, far or near, internal or external, coarse or smooth, are subject to impermanence in the same manner as the present mental state or physical process which is observed by you. That kind of knowledge is called knowledge by inference, *anumana ñana* in Pāli. Sometimes we say *neyya ñana*, knowledge of inference by the actual experience of mental or physical phenomena which are presently observed, judging that the other mental states and physical processes are also subject to impermanence, suffering and impersonal nature of phenomena.

In this way, you comprehend the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena which are either observed or not observed. Then, gradually, your concentration becomes deeper and deeper. The painful sensation decreases. You feel relieved of the noting of the painful sensation. You feel happy, elated, delighted at the noting of any mental state or physical process. Concentration becomes deeper, the mind becomes calmer and serene. You feel a very sublime feeling of tenderness and happiness. You feel rapture and tranquillity. Your mind is not disturbed by anything, so mindfulness is very good, sharp and agile, always ready to note very easily. The effort

becomes steady, neither tense nor relaxed, neither strong nor weak. Steady and moderate effort automatically arises, helping mindfulness to note every object very readily which is arising at the moment. So, you feel happy.

It is at this stage of insight knowledge that you see some light, sometimes a brilliant light, sometimes a faint light, sometimes a light like a fluorescent light. Sometimes you may see a light similar to the head light of a car and so on. But usually none of these lights lasts very long. It comes, and very instantly you note it and it goes away. But there may be some light which lasts for 10 to 20 seconds, not longer than that. But when you are delighted in seeing these lights in this stage of meditation and are attached to the light, the light will come very often and very brilliantly. It may last for some time. You note, "seeing, seeing", but it comes again, lasts for some time, you note, "seeing, seeing". Even though you observe it, you subconsciously like it, you are attached to it; then the light doesn't disappear completely.

One lady meditator, who was about 25 or 30 years old, saw some lights. Gradually, the light became brighter and brighter. She felt delighted in it. But when she was urged to note, she noted it. When she noted the light it went away. Then very instantly it came again and she noted it. But subconsciously she was attached to it. The light lasted for about 20 days. She was disappointed with this light. She couldn't get over it. Why? It is called *nikanti*. *Nikanti* means very subtle attachment. It is like a desire or craving but not so strong. Very stealthily it comes into your mind. Unconsciously you are attached to the object. This is called *nikanti*, one of the ten corruptions of insight knowledge, a very dangerous thing.

In the Buddha's time, there was a monk who first of all practised *samathā* meditation and attained deep concentration. When he had attained *jhāna* concentration he switched his practice to *vipassanā* meditation, observing bodily and mental processes. He attained the third stage of the path knowledge, but after a very long time, because he felt delighted in the attain-

ment of *jhāna* concentration. He had *nikanti*, a very subtle attachment to the *jhāna* concentration. His insight knowledge went up one after another, then again came back because of that attachment to *jhāna* concentration. Then, after he had attained the lower three stages of path knowledge, he again was attached to the three stages of path knowledge too. He couldn't attain Arahatship. The Buddha called it Dhamma *raga*, Dhamma *nandi*. Dhamma *raga* means attachment to Dhamma; Dhamma *nandi* means delight in the attainment of Dhamma, which means *jhāna* concentration. Both Dhamma *raga* and Dhamma *nandi* are *nikanti*. That monk himself didn't know it. Only the Buddha knew it and explained it to the Venerable Ananda about this monk being unable to attain Arahatship.

When you have passed over the third stage of insight, the knowledge of comprehension, we get into the very "bad" good experience of the early part of the fourth stage of insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, *udayabbhaya ñana*. Because we have got over a very difficult, painful, stage, the mind gradually becomes concentrated, light, happy, rapturous, and so on. There are many good experiences at this stage. Because you have these experiences, concentration is very good, you feel tranquil and calm. The mind is very agile, pliant, and subtle and the whole body is suffused with a very tender feeling of rapture and happiness. Then you subconsciously are attached to it. You feel delight in these "bad" good experiences. They are called *upakilesa*.

Upakilesa can literally be translated as "dirty things". These good experiences are very dirty. They defile your insight knowledge a great deal, so that you cannot get to higher stages of insight. You stand still. You get into a dilemma. The Venerable Nyanaponika Thera translated *upakilesa* as "the 10 corruptions". Actually, they are 10 dirty things. You see, the lady meditator I mentioned earlier had to waste her time for about 20 days because of these dirty things.

Then you are told by your teacher that these experiences are great hindrances to your meditation. You must not be attached to them. What you should do is to just watch whatever arises, good or bad, very attentively and energetically. Then you can get over these small good experiences; they are trivial things. Then you proceed with your meditation practice, still with deep concentration. But you don't feel happy, rapturous or tranquil; the mind is still concentrated, it becomes sharp, insight becomes more and more penetrating.

Whatever movement you note, you see it disappearing. Whatever feeling or sensation you note, you see it disappearing. Everything you note is disappearing. Then you come to judge, "Whatever arises is subject to passing away". When you note the lifting movement, 'lifting, lifting', the movement of lifting, when it is noted, passes away. In this way, many broken movements of the foot are arising and passing away incessantly. Here, you come to realize the appearance and disappearance of physical phenomena. Also, when you note thoughts, when a thought comes to you and you note it, the thought disappears. Then another thought and another thought come. You note them. Disappearing, disappearing. You comes to judge, "Oh these thoughts are subject to impermanence. None of these thoughts is everlasting. They are arising and instantly passing away". It is somewhat difficult to realize these three characteristics in thoughts, especially the appearance and disappearance of thoughts. To realize the appearance and disappearance of physical processes, such as rising movements, falling movements, lifting, pushing, dropping, and so on is not as difficult as to experience the appearance and disappearance of thoughts. This stage of knowledge is called the insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, *udayabbhaya ñana*.

The Buddha said that there are five factors for a meditator who expects to be successful:

1. *Saddha*, firm faith in the Triple Gem and especially in the method of meditation.

2. Health. You should be healthy. Unless you are healthy you cannot be successful. If you are healthy you can strive your best during the whole day and night. Sometimes, without sleeping for about seven days, you can continuously practise because of good health. But if your health is very fragile or if you are frail, you can't.
3. You must be honest and straightforward. You must not tell lies about your experience to your teacher or your co-meditators. You must be frank, open, and straightforward as to your meditational experiences.
4. *Viriya*, strenous effort. When the Buddha described this strenous effort, he Buddha used two words which should be well remembered. One word is *parakkama*, ever increasing effort. Then *dahla vīriya*, firm effort. When we compound the two words, it means that you must have ever increasing firm effort. Then you are sure to attain enlightenment. Everyone who has this ever increasing firm effort is sure to attain Nibbāna, liberation. Another one, the Buddha said, is *anikita dhoro*. *Nikita* means to put down, *dhoro* means burden or responsibility. You have the responsibility to proceed with your practice until you have attained Arhatship. You must not put down that responsibility. If you have firm and ever increasing effort, you do not put down your responsibility, your burden. You always shoulder it until you have attained Arhatship. After you have attained Arhatship you put it down.
5. A meditator must have the insight knowledge of arising and passing away of phenomena.

Here, there may arise a question: "How can a meditator from the beginning or in the beginning realize arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena?" No. No meditator realizes the arising and passing away of phenomena in the beginning of the practice. Then he can't be endowed with that factor, the fifth one. But what the Buddha said is if he strives he must have attained this insight of arising and passing away of mental

and physical phenomena. In other words, he must have the ability to realize the appearance and disappearance of phenomena. That's what he meant.

Now I have explained the fourth insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena. Some of you have experienced this knowledge very well. Even the severe pain gives you this knowledge. When you make an attempt to get into the centre of the pain attentively and energetically the mind gradually gets into the centre of the pain. Then the pain can't stay still, so it explodes or disintegrates. Some of you experienced it. Sometimes the pain disperses gradually. Sometimes the pain explodes when your noting mind got into it. It means that you are realizing the arising and passing away of feeling or sensation. *Vedanakkhanda*, the aggregate of feeling or sensation, is a mental state. It means that now that you experienced arising and passing away of mental states or physical processes, or both, you are endowed with the fifth factor of a meditator. So, you are sure to attain the enlightenment if you proceed with your practice intensively, continuously. That's what the Buddha meant.

May all of you be endowed with these five factors of a meditator and attain Arhatship.

The Progress of Insight, contd.[14]

When a meditator is endowed with these five factors (firm faith, health, straightforwardness, strenuous effort and insight knowledge of arising and passing away of phenomena) he is sure to attain path knowledge and fruition knowledge if he proceeds with his intensive practice. When his knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena becomes clear and mature, whatever noted is realized as impermanent, arising, and then passing away. When he notes any pain, stiffening, itching, or aching, he sees the appearance and disappearance of painful sensation one after another very clearly. Sometimes he sees it as the appearance and disappearance of layers of sensation one after another. When he notes the rising and falling movements, he sees many broken movements of the rising process and the falling process very clearly, arising and passing away one after another. Later on he comes to see the very swift appearance and disappearance of the object which is noted.

Then he rarely sees the rising or appearing. Most of the time he sees the disappearance, passing away or dissolution more often than appearance or arising. He feels that all mental states and physical processes are very instantly passing away, very instantly vanishing. Sometimes he feels the very swift disappear-

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ance, dissolution of the object which is noticed. Then he can hardly see the appearance of the object. Most of the time he sees the very swift disappearance and the vanishing of the object.

At this stage of knowledge you do not see the form of the hand or the form of the body. All forms are lost. You have lost the sense of the form of the body, the hand, the leg, and so on. What you are realizing is just disappearance, dissolution, the very swift disappearance of phenomena. Sometimes you feel unconscious for a second or two. You lose your mindfulness. You are absolutely and totally unconscious for a second or two. This means that you see the consciousness disappearing very swiftly. So, both object and subject are very swiftly disappearing, incessantly and continuously. Then, occasionally, you see the subconscious mind. We can say that we can see the subconsciousness in between the conscious mind. When the concentration is good enough, we are able to see the very swift disappearance of the process of consciousness. Occasionally, we can see the subconscious mind as though we feel it. Then we think we are momentarily unconscious for a second or two. This is called the insight knowledge of dissolution, *bhaṅga ñana*.

But a meditator doesn't easily get over or doesn't easily get past this insight knowledge because he needs to see the dissolution of mental and physical phenomena very well; so he stays in this stage of insight knowledge for some time. It's very good. No painful sensation, no itching, no aching. When you sit for a very long time you have no tendency to get up. You can sit for three or four hours at a stretch very easily and comfortably, seeing disappearance and dissolution of all mental and physical phenomena which are observed. Occasionally, as I said, you lose your sense of your bodily form. What you are realizing is just disappearance and appearance of mental and physical phenomena.

Gradually you become fearful about the dissolution of mental and physical phenomena. Whenever you observe any mental state or physical process, what you see is just disappearance, dissolution, passing away of mental and physical phenomena very,

very swiftly. So, you come to feel that these things are very fearful. There is nothing which lasts even a moment or a second. All phenomena, compounded things, *saṅkhāra*, are subject to dissolution, ever passing away, so they are fearful. Sometimes the meditator, when his insight knowledge of dissolution and disappearance of physical and mental phenomena is not so clear, feels fear but he doesn't know what he is fearful of. But he feels fear not about the dissolution, not about the world, not about life, but actually his subconscious mind sees the dissolution and the disappearance of mental and physical phenomena and fears them. When the meditator's insight knowledge is very clear and sharp, he realizes that these mental and physical phenomena are ever passing away, dissolving, so they are fearful. This insight knowledge is called knowledge of fearfulness.

This fear is different from fear you have when you see a tiger or a lion, because when you see them, you have aversion to it. This fear arises out of aversion, this fear is *dosā*. *Dosā* is *akusalā*, an unwholesome mental state. But the fear from insight is not like that. Even though the meditator takes all mental and physical phenomena as fearful things, he hasn't got any aversion to them. He feels that there is fear, that's all. This fear is not *dosā*. It is not *akusalā*. It is *kusalā*, a kind of insight knowledge that realizes the mental and physical phenomena as just fearful.

Then, when you proceed with your intensive practice, from the insight knowledge of dissolution onwards distractions are very few. Thoughts are very few. Even though they arise, you observe them, they disappear instantly. Sometimes you come to know a thought about to arise. Then when you observe it, it doesn't arise. In this way, your concentration becomes deeper and deeper. Then you are disgusted with the fearful mental and physical phenomena which are ever disappearing, ever vanishing when they are noticed. When you are disgusted with them you do not feel delight in these mental and physical processes which are instantly arising and passing away. You feel misery about these mental formations and physical processes. You are

not happy with your meditational experience even though you do not have much distractions or thoughts. Most of the time the concentration is good enough but you are not happy with your meditational experience. We can say you have a gloomy feeling. At that stage your facial expression is not good too. We can say you are in a depressed mood, reluctant to do something as if you are disinterested in meditational experience but, actually, you take interest in it though your facial expression is gloomy.

Then sometimes you think your meditation has gone down; sometimes you think it is hopeless to go on with your practice. But if you observe whatever you feel very attentively at this stage of insight knowledge, it is not very difficult to get over it. You can pass over it very easily when you observe the situation you are in at present. But then you feel disgusted with all mental and physical phenomena which are impermanent, arising, and passing away, especially the very swift vanishing of mental and physical phenomena.

Then you feel boredom about formations and also about your life and the world. You cannot find any place where you can live happily and comfortably. So, sometimes you feel you should go out of the meditation retreat and run away. Sometimes you want to throw yourself into the sea or into a ravine because you do not find any mental or physical process satisfactory. Sometimes, with good concentration, you have the tendency to get up after say, 30, 40 or 45 minutes sitting. You don't have any painful sensation or aching. Concentration is good, meditation is good but you have the desire to get up because you are not satisfied with the present situation.

Here, some meditators, when they feel this boredom, want to go back home. So, they go to their room and pack their things and come to the meditation teachers to ask for permission to go back. Then, we say, "Yes, you can go back. But please wait one more day. Just observe what you feel". Because the teacher is respected and beloved they obey the teacher, "Yes, I'll stay one more day". Then they continue their practice, observing what

they feel, "boredom, boredom—unhappy, unhappy" and so on. Only one night passes. The next day we call that yogi, "Are you going back home today?"—"No, no. I won't go back. Now my meditation is very good" he says. That stage of insight knowledge is very tricky. That is called *nibbida ñana* and also *mucituka ñana*. Two *ñanas*, two stages, which are very tricky. *Nibbida ñana*, knowledge of disgust and *mucituka ñana*, knowledge of desire for deliverance or freedom.

When he proceeds with his practice, he is happy, but again he experiences some physical discomfort: aching, stiffening which he hasn't experienced in the previous stages of insight. Then, here again he experiences pain, stiffening, itching and so on. He is not patient with it. In the earlier stages of insight knowledge, say, the first, second and third stages of insight, he was patient with these sensations and observed them. Now he has this pain, he notices it, but he has the tendency not to be patient with it. He wants to change his position. He wants to get up, but actually he doesn't get up or change his position. He proceeds with his practice. Then in this knowledge of desire for deliverance or freedom, he begins to resume his experience of difficult sensations: pain, stiffening, itching, and so on. But when the teacher explains to him and urges him to observe what he is experiencing, he does very well and passes over this insight knowledge. This insight knowledge is not very difficult to pass over. Then comes the upper stage of insight knowledge, knowledge of reobservation.

Because he wants to get rid of the mental and physical phenomena, which are ever arising and passing away, he strives his best to get rid of these mental and physical phenomena. The more effort he puts forth in his practice, the deeper his concentration becomes. The deeper his concentration becomes, the more severe the painful sensation he experiences becomes. That is the tenth stage of insight knowledge. But he is not reluctant to observe it because he knows that, unless he observes it, he won't be able to get rid of it or to pass over this stage of insight. Some-

times he feels the painful sensation very intensely and severely; sometimes a lumpy, painful sensation is with him. But he is not reluctant, he strives his best, observing it.

Then, later on, he has passed over this stage. All painful sensations are gone. He does not experience any discomfort. He feels happy and peaceful. Concentration becomes deeper and stable. Then he feels tranquil. But he doesn't feel happy any longer. He knows every object arising and passing away whenever it is noticed. What he knows all the time is the arising and passing away of the object which is observed. The mind is concentrated on it. In this stage of insight knowledge, even though he sends his mind to the object which he likes most, the mind doesn't go to the object. The mind becomes elastic. It means that your concentration is very, very good. That is the eleventh stage of insight knowledge. Because of deep concentration, the insight knowledge is penetrating, sharp and clear; so whatever object he observes he knows its appearance and disappearance. There is no object which is not realized as appearance and disappearance by the noting mind. Every object which is noted is seen as appearing and disappearing. His noting becomes stable. He feels comfortable, tranquil, serene but he is neither happy nor unhappy about it.

In this stage, he may experience this knowledge for about five or ten days, sometimes one month. But it is very near to the goal. I think it's natural for meditators to enjoy such a good stage of insight knowledge before they reach the goal. Some meditators stay in this stage for one to one and a half months. "Nothing new, nothing new, but very good concentration. Just appearance and disappearance, instant arising and passing away. Nothing new", they say when interviewed. You see, when you have attained Arhatship, when you became an Arhat. An Arhat doesn't see anything new either. He too sees appearance and disappearance of mental and physical phenomena. Nothing new. That is called the insight knowledge of equanimity, *sankharupekkha ñana*, the eleventh stage, the best one in *vipassanā* meditation. In

this stage, you have to observe any object more attentively and energetically so that you won't take long here. If you observe the object normally and steadily, you will stay here for one or two months. When you observe more attentively and energetically, you come to realize the phenomena very swiftly arising and passing away. Sometimes you may feel dizzy in seeing the swift arising and passing away of the object which is observed. This is the sign by which you know you are about to get rid of this knowledge and go up the higher stages of meditation. Those stages are not very much distinct in a meditator's experience.

But after you have attained or reached the goal, when you review your experience you come to realize, "Oh, this is that, this is that" and so on.

Then you have to pass over the knowledge of adaptation, *anuloma ñana*. This knowledge of adaptation is defined as the knowledge which is in conformity with the previous *vipassanā ñana* and the following *maggā* and *phāla*, so it is called knowledge of adaptation.

Then you come to reach the border, the border between ordinary ones and noble ones. That borderline *ñana* is called knowledge of maturity, *gothrabhu ñana*. When you stand on the border, it is sure that you go forward. You want to go forward because you were striving all along this very, very difficult and very long course of practice. Now you stand on the border. As soon as you make an effort, you get into one another province, the province of the noble ones.

From the fourth *ñana*, insight knowledge of arising and passing away of mental and physical phenomena, until the knowledge of maturity, all of these *ñana* are known as purification of knowledge and vision of the course of the practice, *patipada ñana dassanā visuddhi*. When you have reached the goal, that is *ñana dassanā visuddhi*, purification of knowledge and vision, it is the path knowledge.

There are seven kinds of purification we have to go through until we have attained our goal. The first, purification of *sila*, or

moral conduct; the second, purification of mind; the third, purification of view; the fourth, purification of overcoming doubt; the fifth, purification of knowledge and vision of what is path and not path; the sixth, purification of knowledge and vision of the course of practice, and the seventh, purification of knowledge and vision, *maggā ñana*. Everytime you make a note you are closer than before.

May all of you strive your best to go through all these 7 stages of purification and attain Arhatship.

Questions and Answers in South Africa[15]

At the Lam Rim.[16]

QUESTION: When suffering ends, do all emotions also fall away? Is there still a state of joy?

ANSWER: In accordance with Buddhist Abhidhamma Buddhist philosophy, there are two types of happiness. One is happiness which can be felt, but although we say the other one is happiness, it's not happiness, it's peace which cannot be felt but we get into it. Happiness which can be felt is called *vedanasukkha*. The happiness or peace which cannot be felt but can be experienced is called *santisukkha*, peacefulness. When *dukkhā* (suffering) ends, there's no feeling of happy sensation, happy feeling, but we experience peace because there is no suffering at all. So, when suffering ends, we experience peace, no emotional states, no feeling, no sensation but there's peace when suffering ends, that's called *santisukkha*.

QUESTION: What happens when our physical body dies?

[15] Venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw of Myanmar (Burma) Teaching Tour, January and February 1999.

[16] Tibetan Buddhist Centre, Johannesburg, Sunday, 31st January 1999.

ANSWER: When the physical body dies there's the mental state that arises after the disappearance of the last consciousness of the previous life. After the disappearance of the last consciousness of the previous life another mental state arises in the next existence, though the body has died. We call this rebirth. The first consciousness of the next existence is related by cause and effect.

QUESTION: In psychology, dreams are used to gain a fuller understanding of a person's being. Do dreams have a role in Buddhism?

ANSWER: In Buddhism, there's no role for dreams.

QUESTION: Who am I? Please explain.

ANSWER: You are mental and physical phenomena.

QUESTION: How does Sayadaw suggest to approach the spontaneous arising of colours and visualisations during meditation?

ANSWER: The colours are seen by the mind, a mental state which must be observed until that mind has disappeared. When you see colours, the consciousness of seeing is an absolute reality which must be realized, must be observed, "seeing, seeing, seeing", until that colour has disappeared. Then that consciousness of seeing has disappeared. Whatever you have in your mind while you are meditating must be observed until it has disappeared.

QUESTION: Sayadaw suggested that we shouldn't analyse or think things through, but the moment that we're trying to work out what we're doing, an emotion or an activity or whatever, you are actually analysing to an extent.

ANSWER: No need to analyse any emotional states or mental states. Because you know what your emotion is, you observe it . But if you don't have any word for the emotional state, just observe it, that's enough.

QUESTION: Do you have any advice for people who understand the meditation technique but who also want to get some benefit from the meditation in their daily life at work, at home, with their families? How can they apply the meditation to their daily life?

ANSWER: They can have a general awareness of what they are doing. In a meditation retreat or meditation centre, you have to slow down your actions and movements so that you can be aware of each individual action very precisely. At home you need not slow down, you can do all actions and movements normally and steadily, but you should be generally aware of what you are doing. If you have, say, about thirty or forty minutes of time for meditation, then you walk ten minutes and sit thirty minutes. Walking first and sitting later. Every sitting should be preceded by walking meditation, because in the walking meditation the object of meditation is very prominent to your mind, so you can concentrate better than in the sitting. So, you walk first, then sit. Suppose you have one hour for meditation, then you should practise walking meditation for twenty minutes, another forty minutes, you sit.

QUESTION: We practice Loving Kindness meditation towards all sentient beings. Are the algae in the swimming pool and the ticks on the dog sentient beings?

ANSWER: In Loving Kindness meditation, there are two types: one is specific loving kindness, the other is unspecific or general loving kindness. For specific

loving kindness meditation, you have to choose a person or a group of persons and say, "May these beings be happy and peaceful". In that way you can concentrate on that person (or persons) to a certain extent. But for unspecific meditation you have to wish for the welfare of all living beings of the world. Then your mind is not well concentrated on all these beings but you have developed the spirit of loving kindness in you because you wish all these beings peace and happiness, your mind becomes calm and concentrated to a certain extent. Specific loving kindness enables the meditator to concentrate better on the object of meditation than unspecific loving kindness. Any being which is regarded as living is included in unspecific Loving Kindness meditation.

QUESTION: This meditation can remove our own suffering but how can we remove the suffering of others?

ANSWER: In Buddhism, no-one can do it for the other people. If he wants to be happy he must do it for himself. We can help other people to get rid of suffering to a certain extent by advising them and giving them a hand, but they must try themselves to get rid of suffering. Now, you see, we came here to teach you how to meditate, *vipassanā* meditation so that you can remove your suffering to a certain extent. In this way, we are helping the other people to get rid of their suffering.

QUESTION: Can prayers help these people?

ANSWER: Yes, there may be some help from the prayer of other people because some people have faith. If they hear other people praying they feel happy. In this way, the prayer of some people can help other people to a certain extent.

QUESTION: Does the practice of morality (keeping precepts), kind and compassionate living with good relationships lead to the reduction of suffering?

ANSWER: Yes. As you know, in Buddhism we have five precepts to observe, that's morality. When you observe the five precepts, you have to abstain from killing, taking what is not given, any kind of sexual misconduct, telling lies and any kind of intoxicants. If you refrain from harming any living beings, other people are not hurt, and you can reduce their suffering by observing your precepts.

QUESTION: Is the Sigolavada sutta of benefit to people today?

ANSWER: Yes, today too.

Interview in "The Star"[17]

QUESTION: Is meditation the easiest way to access Buddhist teachings?

ANSWER: Yes, I think so. The easiest way to approach Buddhism is through meditation.

QUESTION: Can anybody do it?

ANSWER: Yes, anybody can do it, irrespective of race, religion or nationality.

QUESTION: Do you see Buddhism as a religion or a way of life?

ANSWER: What do you mean by the word religion?

QUESTION: Is it a fixed religion like Christianity or Judaism?

[17] Monday, 1st February 1999, in Pretoria, with Ms Ufreida Ho.

ANSWER: We don't believe in any God, any divine power or cosmic consciousness, but what we believe in is our own action, Kamma. So, Buddhism is much more than a way of life, it's a way of liberation from suffering.

QUESTION: Why do you think that the Western World has become so drawn to the Buddhist way of life?

ANSWER: I think, in the Western World, the people have had much material development which cannot satisfy their needs, so they try to have their mind satisfied with their spiritual development or mental development. Buddhism teaches all the people to develop their mind into the liberation from all kinds of suffering. By practising Buddhism, one can liberate one's mind from all kinds of suffering. This means that if we practise meditation it enables the meditator to live in peace and happiness. That peace and happiness of the mind, I think, attracts the Western World to follow Buddhism.

QUESTION: What are the first steps for the meditation?

ANSWER: To start the meditation, you have to observe the precepts first, so that your speech and deed are purified. Purification of deed and speech is the basic requirement for a meditator to start with. That's why you have to observe the precepts. The Buddha laid down such precepts as five precepts, eight precepts, nine precepts and the two hundred and twenty seven precepts for bhikkhus. First of all, you have to observe these precepts so that you can purify your deeds and speech. Based on the purification of deeds and speech you practise either *samathā* meditation or *vipassanā* meditation. We have in Buddhism two types of meditation, the first

is *samathā*, meditation the other is *vipassanā* meditation. *Samathā*, serenity or tranquillity meditation, is practised to attain a higher degree of concentration which makes your mind calm and peaceful, not to realise any mental or physical phenomena. *Vipassanā*, insight or mindfulness meditation, is practised to attain some degree of concentration as well as the realisation of the true nature of your bodily and mental phenomena. Through realisation of mental and physical phenomena in their true nature, you can remove some mental defilements or negative mental states which are the causes of suffering. In this way, you can attain the cessation of suffering and you can live in peace and happiness. Both meditations should be practised by a meditator, based on the purification of deed and speech which can be gained by observing the precepts.

QUESTION: The goal of meditation then would be to have that peacefulness or is the goal enlightenment?

ANSWER: The goal of peacefulness can be attained through enlightenment. Unless one is enlightened, one can't achieve the goal of peace. The goal of peace here means Nibbāna—the cessation of all kinds of suffering. It can be attained through enlightenment. This enlightenment can be attained through the practise of this meditation, mindfulness meditation or *vipassanā* meditation.

QUESTION: How often would someone have to meditate? Is the meditation incorporated into daily life?

ANSWER: Yes meditation can be incorporated into daily life. Meditation is not for a person who stays in a meditation retreat or meditation centre, it's for all the people at home, for daily life. This *vipassanā* meditation is called mindfulness meditation

too, which means that you are mindful of whatever arises in your body and mind as it really occurs. In other words, you are mindful of any activity of your mind and body as it is from moment to moment. So, if you want to apply this mindfulness to your daily life, you should be mindful of whatever you are doing as it really occurs. That is meditation. In this way, your mindfulness of all actions and movements becomes powerful, continuous, and sustained and everything you do is done mindfully. Then, there's no wrong-doing, false acts, or false speech because of mindfulness. The benefit of mindfulness is not only that, but to liberate your mind from all defilements and all suffering. But you have to practise it continuously and intensively at a meditation centre or meditation retreat to gain the benefit.

QUESTION: How long would you be in a retreat for?

ANSWER: At least you should spend about one and a half months or two months to gain remarkable benefit from this meditation. Seven or ten days is just a learning stage.

QUESTION: So, the meditation in that form is not something you can do at home, you have to be in a retreat?

ANSWER: First of all, you should practise on a retreat, say, for about ten days or one month, so that you can learn the correct practice. If you practise at home you may take the wrong path. If you practise at a meditation centre or meditation retreat, say, for about ten days or one month, you know the correct path or correct way of practice.

QUESTION: So, there's not really an individual path to meditation?

ANSWER: There's an individual path, individually you can practise it.

QUESTION: But there's a right way to do it, not an individual way?

ANSWER: It is individual work. When you are at home and scrubbing the floors, you observe the movement of your hand, that's meditation, that's individual work. No one needs to help you because you can observe the movement of your hands. That's mindfulness meditation, individual work. You see, the principle of this mindfulness meditation is very easy; the principle is to see things as they really are. So, you have to see any mental state arising as it is, you have to see any physical process that arises at that moment as it is, that's the principle, that's mindfulness meditation, very easy, very simple and very much effective.

QUESTION: Do people actually come to the monastery?

ANSWER: Yes, people come to the monastery and enquire about meditation and the teaching of the Buddha. Recently we have built our meditation hall in Pietermaritzburg. Anyone can come and practise meditation there.

QUESTION: Is this your first trip to South Africa?

ANSWER: This is the third trip. 1995, first trip, 1997, second trip, this is the third trip. In 1995, when I came here, I delivered some lectures on Buddhism, especially to the Burmese people and also to the South Africans in Ixopo and Durban. At that time, I told the Burmese people to try to establish a meditation centre here, so that anyone who takes interest in meditation in South Africa can meditate. They bought a

house on one acre. In 1997, we opened that meditation centre in Pietermaritzburg. You have the address, it's called, "Dhammodaya Myanmar Vihara". At that time also I delivered Dhamma talks at Ixopo, the Buddhist Retreat Centre and in Cape Town too. This time, very recently, I conducted a meditation retreat in Cape Town. Altogether twenty one meditators took part in that 10 days meditation retreat.

QUESTION: Is it important to keep coming back to maintain that connection with your community?

ANSWER: Yes, so that I can inspire them to go on with their work of the propagation of the Buddha *sasana*. That's why I came here every second year. Every second year they invited me. But I've visited not only this country, I've visited about twenty eight countries from 1979 onward.

QUESTION: Are they countries in the Western World?

ANSWER: Yes, in Europe, the United States, Canada, and Asia too: Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Philipines, Malaysia, Thailand, almost all countries in Asia. I go abroad twice a year. Before I came here on this trip, I went to Thailand, Malaysia, Borneo, Sabah, Sarawak, conducting meditation retreats, and after that I came here.

QUESTION: Do you have a message for the South African Community?

ANSWER: Yes to abstain from evil, to do good, and to purify their minds in any way.

QUESTION: Are the needs of South Africa quite different to the goals of other countries?

ANSWER: I don't think so, South Africa is not very different from the other countries.

Interview in the "Pretoria News"[18]

QUESTION: What is the purpose of your visit to South Africa?

ANSWER: The purpose of my visit to South Africa is to deliver Dhamma talks on Buddhism and to conduct meditation retreats. Also to ordain some Myanmar Doctors as Bhikkhus (monks) and some children as lower ordination novices. I arrived here on the seventh of January and on the ninth of January we ordained eleven doctors as Bhikkhus, that's higher ordination and one South African gentleman was also ordained. Then, on the eleventh, we had the consecration of our Sima hall, ordination hall. If we want to ordain anyone as a Bhikkhu, we must first consecrate the Sima hall and then anyone can be ordained as a Bhikkhu in that ordination hall.

QUESTION: What is Sayadaw's message for the South African people at the public talks and lectures?

ANSWER: Happiness through right understanding.

QUESTION: Is this your first time to South Africa?

ANSWER: This is the third time. 1995 was the first time, 1997 was the second time.

QUESTION: Do you like the country?

ANSWER: Yes, I like every country.

QUESTION: Do you think that the average South Africans understands meditation?

ANSWER: Yes, if they listen to the discourses on meditation they will be able to understand, I think. Because

[18] Interviewed by Ms Zelda Venter of the Pretoria News newspaper, Tuesday, 2nd February 1999.

the discourses of the Buddha are not very difficult to understand.

QUESTION: Do you think that meditation could be of value to South Africans with all the problems that we have here?

ANSWER: Yes it would be very valuable, not only to South Africans but all people in the world, if they practise this meditation.

QUESTION: Is it possible for South Africans to find inner peace with violence around them everyday?

ANSWER: Yes.

A message of peace using meditation[19]

South Africans should gain peace of mind through meditation. Only then would they be a happier, healthier and peaceful nation. This is the message of visiting Buddhist master and monk Chanmyay Sayadaw, U Janakabhivamsa to South Africans, who have to face crime daily. While adding that the need to bring serenity and calm to the mind was very important, Sayadaw stressed that Buddhism did not have to be seen as a religion. Anyone, including Christians, could practise meditation. It was an open way of life without any secrets and also a very practical way of life. Sayadaw is an internationally renowned meditation master who has been in a Buddhist monastery since childhood. He is also the abbot of the Chanmyay Yeiktha meditation centre in Yangon (Rangoon) and patron abbot of Myanmar Buddhist centres in London and in South Africa. He hopes to give inspiration to South Africans on his visit here. As part of his programme in the country he also held a Dharma talk at the Theosophical Society in Pretoria. He was part of a nine day meditation programme held at Nan Hua Temple in Bronkhorstspruit that ended

[19] Zelda Venter, Pretoria News, Wednesday, February 17, 1999.

on February 13. Sayadaw also paid a visit to, among others, a group of Burmese doctors in Pietermaritzburg who arrived in the country in 1996 as part of Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma's call for foreign doctors to help in South Africa. The master explained that meditation was part of daily life. "Washing your hands could be meditation. You must just be aware of your every movement", he said. He explained that the core of Buddhism was to do good and to abstain from doing evil things. Meditation could even, in certain instances, help cure physical illness, because some illness were caused by the mind, he said. Meditation, he explained, could be practised by anyone, provided they had the desire to meditate. Insight meditation, one of the two main types of meditation, was a simple technique that could be learned by anyone.

At the Johannesburg Theosophical Society[20]

QUESTION: What are the benefits of meditation?

ANSWER: In the Maha Satipatthana Sutta, the Buddha pointed out the benefits of this meditation. In accordance with that discourse, the first benefit is the purification of beings. That means, by means of this meditation you can purify your mind of all undesirable, negative mental states. When your mind is purified, you live in peace and happiness. The second and third benefits are the overcoming of sorrow and worry. If you feel sorrow, you can overcome it by means of this meditation because you have to be mindful of it. When you are mindful of the sorrow then gradually you come to realise the true nature of the sorrow. Then that sorrow has disappeared, in the same way, worry, and so on. Then the fourth and the fifth are the cessation of mental suffering

[20] Tuesday, 2nd February 1999.

and physical suffering. We call that grief and pain. The sixth is the attainment of enlightenment which is path knowledge *maggā-ñana* in accordance with Abhidhamma or Buddhism. The final benefit the experience of Nibbāna the cessation of all kinds of suffering. These are the seven benefits that a *vipassanā* meditator can attain when he is able to practise fully.

QUESTION: Have you or do you know of anybody who has reached these states of bliss or enlightenment through meditation?

ANSWER: Yes, some meditators have reached these stages of enlightenment when they have practised intensively, say, for about two or three months incessantly, continuously. We have to consult their experiences with what the scriptures say as to the quality of the meditator who has attained enlightenment. Then we can say he has attained such enlightenment.

QUESTION: How do you discipline the mind while you're in pain, physical and emotional, to accept the pain the pain and the suffering?

ANSWER: Mindfulness of the pain is the best way of disciplining. When you are mindful of the pain whenever it arises, first of all the pain seems to be more severe gradually. When you are patient with it, and observe it precisely the pain gradually decreases and sometimes it disappears.

QUESTION: Can you, as a practising Buddhist, be able to let go of suffering, surpass it and be happy?

ANSWER: Yes, Buddhism is the way of overcoming suffering by being aware of it, by being mindful of it as

it is. Only when you are able to rightly understand suffering, you can get rid of it and experience the cessation of suffering.

QUESTION: Why Buddhism in comparison to other faiths and religions?

ANSWER: We don't really know the definition of the word religion. If the definition of religion is believing in a God or creator, then Buddhism is not a religion. Buddhism offers a system, or a way of life, so that you can reach the cessation of suffering by practice.

QUESTION: Does Reiki fit in with Buddhism and where? Reiki is a way of healing?

ANSWER: That is not Buddhism.

QUESTION: How did you become a Buddhist and at what point were you able to say, "I'm a Buddhist"?

ANSWER: When you believe in the Buddha, his teaching and the order of Buddhist monks, you can be said to be a Buddhist.

QUESTION: What is the attitude towards donating organs or body parts, especially with regard to allowing the body three hours or ten hours for the spirit soul consciousness to depart?

ANSWER: Even the Buddha in his previous existences donated his body parts, his limbs, even he donated his eyes to some person who needs it. It should be encouraged.

QUESTION: What is your response to conversion or interest or investigation of Buddhism?

ANSWER: We are not interested in conversion, but we take interest in anyone who takes interest in Buddhist meditation.

QUESTION: Are there any hints as to how one to what extent one is supposed to be mindful throughout the day?

ANSWER: If you want to be a successful meditator, you have to be mindful of any actions and movements throughout the day. In a meditation retreat in a meditation centre you have to do that. At home too, you are able to do that but then you need not slow down, you do all actions and movements normally and you should apply general awareness to what your doing. When you are generally aware of what you are doing, that awareness gradually becomes more and more sharp and powerful. The it will give you concentration to a certain extent and some peace and happiness too.

QUESTION: This was my first time to meditate and while I was meditating I was conscious of my hands, palms and after a while I felt that they were no longer there. Can you explain it?

ANSWER: You need not pay any attention to the disappearance of the hands. You should be mindful of the other mental or physical processes which are predominant.

QUESTION: If one felt oneself lifting or departing from ones physical being during meditation, is it something to be scared of or should it be controlled, or what should one do?

ANSWER: When you have two or three or more objects arising at the same moment, you should observe the most prominent object. When you feel that your body is lifted, then if you know the mind is going, you should observe the mind that is wandering. If the feeling of the lifting is more predominant then

that feeling must be observed. Whatever is the most predominant object must be observed. In accordance with *vipassanā* meditation, you must not control any mental states or physical processes. What you should do is just see it as it is, that's all.

QUESTION: When I was meditating, I was sleepy so I laid down on my side and I had that floating experience. And when I became more mindful of it, I became very scared. Can you explain it?

ANSWER: When you feel that the mind is drifting, that drifting mind must be observed until it has disappeared. When you observe it it will disappear. If the fear is more predominant it must be observed, "fear, fear, fear" until it has disappeared.

QUESTION: Do you use mantras in the Theravāda tradition?

ANSWER: In *vipassanā* meditation, you need not have a mantra as the object of meditation. Any mental states or physical processes that arise at any moment are the objects of meditation, you need not find any other object.

QUESTION: How do you face fear and let go of it?

ANSWER: If you observe fear, then it will gradually disappear. When you do it practically, you'll know it through practice because the fear is overwhelmed by the mindfulness, the concentration, so the fear disappears. But you need to observe it, you need to note it attentively enough.

At the Pretoria Theosophical Society[21]

QUESTION: How to achieve balance between fulfilling one's duties and time for meditation?

ANSWER: This mindfulness meditation is not only for a meditator in a meditation retreat or at a meditation centre, it's especially for people at home. Mindfulness should be applied to what you are doing at home. You can do it because we have three aspects of practice: walking, sitting, and awareness of daily activities or general activities. When you do your work at home, whatever you may do, you should be aware of what you are doing, generally not specifically, without noting, without labelling. Say, when you stretch out your arms to do something, you need not slow down, you do it normally, steadily but be generally aware of it without labelling or noting. When you get accustomed to do that, it will give you some concentration and also you'll be happy with it. Suppose, you walk to any destination. You should not think about any other things. You should observe the movement of the foot without labelling, being aware of each movement of the foot normally, steadily. Then your mind will be concentrated to a certain extent and you'll reach your destination without your knowledge, "Ah, I have arrived!". Because your mind is concentrated on the movement of the foot, you feel happy. First of all, you should train yourself at a meditation centre or at a retreat, say, for about a week or ten days, so that you can correctly practise this type of meditation. After that, you can apply it to your daily life.

[21] Thursday, 4th February 1999.

QUESTION: How to achieve a balance between attachment and detachment?

ANSWER: Attachment and detachment cannot be balanced ... But if you rightly understand your bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature, your attachment to your body and your attachment to any other person becomes gradually decreasing. You see, attachment is the cause of suffering. If you're attached to your car and it's stolen, then you're suffering, that attachment is the cause of your suffering. That's what the Buddha said in his four Noble Truths; the second Noble Truth is *samuttaya saccā*—the truth of the cause of suffering. It refers to attachment, desire, lust greed, craving, grasping. Attachment is the cause of suffering, the immediate cause of suffering, the Buddha said. When you rightly understand your bodily and mental phenomena in their true nature, that attachment will decrease gradually. Then your suffering will also decrease.

QUESTION: Please explain again how to identify the elements within the body.

ANSWER: When you are mindful of any phenomena which arises in your body, gradually you'll be able to identify these characteristics of the elements.

QUESTION: Is it possible to be attached to the concept of non-attachment?

ANSWER: It is impossible to be attached to the concept of non-attachment because in non-attachment there's no attachment at all, just right understanding.

QUESTION: Ignorance is the cause of suffering. Are there things that should be ignored?

ANSWER: You are ignorant of your bodily and mental phenomena. It is very obvious that you are not able to rightly understand the true nature of your body and mind as they really occur. These are the objects of ignorance.

About the author

The venerable Chanmyay Sayadaw U Janakābhivaṃsa, born 24 July 1928, is a Theravada Buddhist monk from Myanmar.

He was born in Pyinma village, Taungdwingyi Township, British Burma, on Tuesday, 24 July 1928. His parents were U Phyu Min and Daw Shwe Yee. He started to study the Buddhist scriptures at the age of fifteen as a novice monk. He received the higher upasampada ordination in 1947 and continued advanced studies of Buddhist scriptures. He practised Vipassana meditation under the instruction of the most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw from 1953 to 1954. He was then invited by the State Buddha Sasana Organization to be an editor of the Buddhist scriptures in Pali for reciting Buddhist scriptures at the Sixth Buddhist Council in Myanmar.

Starting from 1957, the Venerable Sayadaw spent six years in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where he continued his studies of English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Sinhalese languages. He returned to Myanmar in June 1963. At the invitation of the state Buddha Sasana Organisation, he took up residence at Kaba-Aye where he edited the publications of Pali Texts.

In 1967, he was appointed by the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw as a meditation teacher at Mahasi Sasana Yeiktha, Yangon. In 1977 Sayadaw Ashin Janakabhivamsa took up residence at Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Center which was donated to him by some devotees and became the abbot of the center. He has been since then well known as Chanmyay Sayadaw.

In 1979 - 1980 Chanmyay Sayadaw accompanied the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's Dhamma Mission to Europe and the U.S.A. He has undertaken many Dhamma missions to countries in Asia, Europe, and the United States. As recently as July 2015, at the age of 87, he travelled to the UK, Ireland, and Canada giving Dhamma Talks.